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FEBRUARY 6, 1995 • $2.95

THE NEW REPUBLIC

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

A Weekly Journal of Opinion

FEBRUARY 6, 1995

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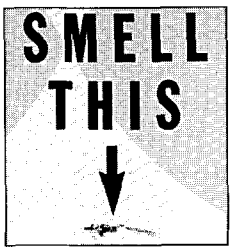

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CORRESPONDENCE

Mutual suspicions

To the editors:

In his article "History Lesson" (January 2), Jon Wiener credits me with things that I have never said so that he can then poke holes in "my" argument. Here are a few things I actually have said.

In the thirty-one general standards that compose the framework for studying U.S. history, the Constitution is not mentioned once, while the Great Depression is mentioned three times. Anyone who doubts these assertions should check pages 35, 36 and 37 of the U.S. standards.

Often the standards condemn a practice when it occurs in a Western culture while offering praise when it occurs in the non-West. Students are invited to put John D. Rockefeller on trial, but to admire the "achievements and grandeur" of an African wealth-gatherer, the King Mansa Musa.

Wiener disingenuously claims that the standards are "unbiased and resolutely middle-of-the-road." It boggles the mind that anyone would so describe a document in which the gathering of the first Congress is never mentioned, but the foundings of the Sierra Club and the National Organization for Women are; or in which the cold war is presented as a product of "mutual suspicions" and macho "confrontations" rather than a struggle between freedom and Communist totalitarianism.

LYNNE CHENEY
Jackson, Wyoming

To the editors:

My comments in *The Wall Street Journal*, which Jon Wiener notes in his article "History Lesson," referred to the penultimate—not the final—draft of the proposed standards for world history, a point that was made clear in other newspapers and should have been made clear in the *Journal*. In the final draft, the treatment of Genghis Khan was altered to make clear that Khan's rule was far from benign. A few other improvements were made as well.

Unfortunately, and to our great regret, the general point that I was making—that the standards emphasize the terrible things done in the West and skate right over equally bad or worse things done elsewhere—holds true in the final draft.

But our critique of the standards went well beyond the differential treatment of the West and non-West. Of great concern to us is the document's distorted treatment of, and the enormous gaps it leaves in, contemporary history.

If Wiener had read the full statements of the groups he chides, he would have seen that the American Federation of Teachers has not been "swept up in the Cheney critique." In fact, with regard to the U.S. History Standards (the main document Cheney went after), we noted that Cheney's claim that the proposed U.S. history standards didn't deal with the U.S. Constitution was wildly off-base.

ALBERT SHANKER
President, American Federation of Teachers
Washington, D.C.

Lot in life

To the editors:

Let me get this straight—Jennifer Bradley, in spite of her misgivings about Catholicism, continues to go to church because she needs a tradition ("My So-Called Faith," January 9 & 16)? If she is reluctant to abandon the Church because her early Catholic educators failed to fill her head with sufficient catechism to allow her to make informed dissent, then she should visit her nearest Catholic bookstore and start reading. She could begin with Thomas Aquinas ("if a woman dies in childbed, then let her, for that is her lot in life"). She would learn lots of interesting things, including the fact that the Church once seriously debated whether women had souls.

But she shouldn't waste her time attempting learned debate with those who already know, but don't care, that their dogma is contradictory and irrelevant, and who, because she is a woman, aren't interested in her opinion, well-documented though it may be. According to the Church, no matter how much you may want to know God, you can never fully serve him if you are born with ovaries instead of testicles.

DEZ CRAWFORD
Baton Rouge, Louisiana

To the editors:

Jennifer Bradley's description of her lukewarm Catholicism is revealing—more as to the woeful expectations and condition of the writer's faith than any objective failing of her Catholic religion. Clearly, Bradley's first obligation is to educate herself in the established truths of her religion. One's life meaning and eternal destiny would seem to justify greater demands of one's spare time than aerobics, potluck dinners and T.V. reruns.

Next, her Catholicism needs serious maturation. Cheap shots at Cardinal O'Connor and a priest trying to contend

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with sexually engrossed adults more interested in the worship of their own egos than in finding God will only extend Bradley's sad and ultimately meaningless journey into herself.

RONALD S. LEHMAN
Atlanta, Georgia

To the editors:

Jennifer Bradley asks if it is "overdramatic to say we are a generation of lost Catholics"? If anything, it is an understatement. Unfortunately, in an effort to make Catholicism accessible and hip in the late 1960s and early 1970s, the Church threw the baby out with the bath water. It stopped teaching dogma and doctrine, replacing them with religion classes that more closely resembled group psychotherapy sessions. In my fourteen years at a Catholic girls' school, we "meditated" during religion class to James Taylor songs and discussed peer pressure while sitting campfire-style in a circle. Jesus was love, and being nice to other people was the only moral imperative that mattered. Theology never came up. At no time were we taught about the history, mysteries, symbols and tenets of Catholicism—which are the essence of why we should feel a moral imperative to do good. As a result, an entire generation of Catholics knows nothing about why the Church asks them what it asks them to do. I'd say that's lost.

STEPHANIE RIEGEL
New Orleans, Louisiana

Memory lapse

To the editors:

Tony Coelho blames the Democrats' 1994 loss on former President Reagan's announcement that he has Alzheimer's. Coelho showed poor taste with this absurdity, especially in light of his past comments. In 1984, after President Reagan botched a presidential debate, Coelho said that he "looked old and acted old." Asked if the president seemed doddering, he answered: "Well, he didn't quite drool." And when a fellow House member told him that he had crossed the line of propriety, he sarcastically responded that he had made the "drool" comment in President Reagan's defense. Now, Coelho is using President Reagan as an alibi.

JOHN J. PITNEY JR.
Claremont, California

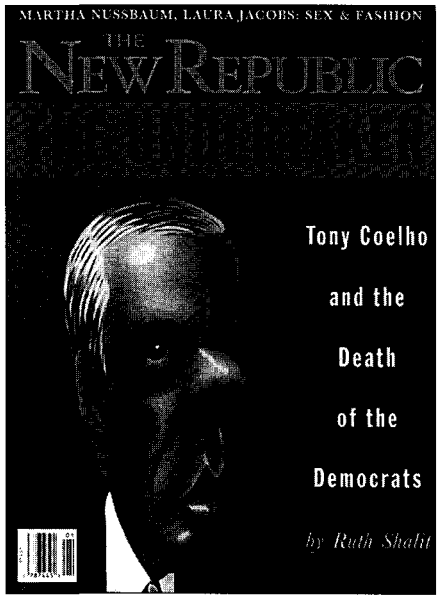
Go West, ctd.

To the editors:

Fareed Zakaria's letter (Correspondence, January 9 & 16) proved Michael Lewis's main contention that writers on foreign affairs often make their cases with little attention to the facts. The assertion that King Alexander of Yugoslavia was assassinated in Marseilles by a Croat Fascist ignores the fact that Vlada Gheorghieff, a Macedonian, was the assassin. The Croat Fascists who assisted him were headquartered in Hungary, not Italy, as Zakaria contends. They undoubtedly were linked to the Ustashe's other state sponsor, Italy, but Zakaria nevertheless got it wrong.

Furthermore, to describe Gavrilo Princip, the archduke's assassin, simply as a "Bosnian terrorist" ignores the fact that he was a Serbian nationalist who received his murder weapon from Serbian government arsenals.

With regard to Zakaria's contention that Rebecca West understood something her maid didn't, her much-touted travel log *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* is slanted with her biased British perspective of the area at the time, including a biased perspective of history.



KEL BRITVEC
Alexandria, Virginia

Idolized model celebrities

To the editors:

In her article "Prêt-à-Poor Taste" (January 2), Laura Jacobs confuses a confessional of her staid personal taste for a critical analysis of modern-day fashion photography. Jacobs criticizes today's fashion magazines for their "severed connection to high art" and their "ethic of technique," yet, at the same time, she acknowledges that today's high art and photographic devices have naturally evolved into different formats. Consequently, today's fashion spreads are no less artistic, they have just been adjusted to our current society. According to Jacobs, "great fashion photography is a record of our energies," and reading a fashion magazine should be "a prowl through human nature." Yet, oddly, she dismisses today's fashion photographers for capturing the "fast, hot shot," the essence of today's idolized model celebrities. Jacobs should open her eyes to acknowledge the truth of a "slack, static, dreamless, lightless" vision, outside her snobbish, idealized world of halos.

SANDRA MILBERG
New York, New York

Always a reckoning

To the editors:

There is room for some reasonable disagreement with former President Carter's peace mission to the warring factions in the former Yugoslav Republic. I find no reasonableness whatsoever in your raging, way-beyond-the-pale editorial ("Merry Christmas, Mr. Karadzić," January 9 & 16). What is it about Carter that causes you to "lose it" when discussing any actions in which he takes part? I often disagree with positions you take, while at the same time accepting them as reasonable contributions to an ongoing intellectual debate. I don't recall ever reading anything quite so nasty in any previous editorial. In this instance, I don't just disagree with what you have written, I completely reject it.

JAMES P. SHOFFNER
Elk Grove Village, Illinois

To the editors:

I was just about to let my TNR subscription run out. Then I read the piece on Jimmy Carter's Bosnia mission. Heck, on Monday, I'm going to call in and renew my subscription! What a courageous piece of journalism. Finally, somebody realizes that the emperor has no clothes on.

CHRISTIAN DEYSSON
Chevy Chase, Maryland

Daily double

To the editors:

Thanks very much for giving us both sides of the David Dreier/Dreyer story in the same issue ("Slash and Burn" by Weston Kosova and "The Undertaker" by Ruth Shalit, January 2). No other media source has been so evenhanded.

Thanks also for offering opportunities to writers named Jon Wiener ("History Lesson" by Jon Wiener and "The Gay Science" by Jonathan Weiner), regardless of area of interest or consistency of spelling. This reader looks forward to more double issues in the future, perhaps pairing pundits named for other major appliances or foods.

ARTHUR X. STOCK
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

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Where We Stand

By Albert Shanker, President
American Federation of Teachers

Beyond Merit Pay

How can excellent teaching be recognized and rewarded? We've been waiting a long time for a good answer to this question, and last week we finally got one. The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards awarded its first certificates of advanced competency. The recipients were 81 middle and junior high school teachers from across the country who had demonstrated that they knew their stuff in a grueling, year-long series of assessments.

Some heroic souls will do their best no matter how little recognition they get. Most people, though, respond to external incentives, and teachers are no different from the rest of us. But if you don't get the incentives right, you are likely to make things worse instead of better.

Merit pay has been the usual strategy for recognizing and rewarding excellence in teaching, and there's nothing wrong, in principle, with giving people pay for performance. However, most teachers oppose merit pay because it often has nothing to do with merit and everything to do with how well you get along with the principal. Good teaching is not the same thing as being willing to take extra bus duty or prompt in getting paperwork back to the central office. And the one or two hasty classroom visits that most principals pay in the course of a year may not be enough to show who *is* doing good teaching.

Another problem with merit pay is that it encourages teachers to compete rather than collaborate. Research and common sense tell us that teaching improves when teachers work together to share ideas and problems. With merit pay schemes, where a limited pot of money is shared by a limited number of people, the incentive is to keep good ideas to yourself: Why reveal a successful strategy for teaching a math topic to a "competitor"? It's easy to see who loses in this kind of arrangement—the kids.

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards proposes a totally different model for assessing and promoting excellence in teaching. Over the past eight years, the board, a majority of whose members are K-12 teachers, has been developing standards for what teachers should know and be able to do. And it plans eventually to offer board certification in more than 30 teaching specialties at every level and in every field. As the assessments taken by the middle and junior high school generalists who were certified last week demonstrate, board certification will not be a rubber stamp.

The National Board proposes a totally different model for assessing and promoting excellence in teaching.

The first stage involved submitting a portfolio of work that included videotapes of classroom lessons along with extensive written material describing and analyzing how these teachers help their students learn. Applicants reported spending an average of 100-plus hours getting their portfolios ready. Next, they traveled to an assessment center where they faced two days of oral and written assessments. They evaluated videos of other teachers and discussed their own practice, they created elaborate lesson plans and they demonstrated their knowledge of the subject matter they teach. The assessments were not the machine-scored, minimum-competency tests we often associate with evaluating teachers: They required the kind of mastery achieved by people at the top of their profession.

The National Board does not represent a reform imposed on teaching from outside. Rather, we have a profession defining its own high standards for excellence and creating a national credential to recognize practitioners who meet the standards—the way physicians and lawyers and architects have already done.

The existence of this new credential could have an enormous impact on classroom teaching. There are currently few ways of rewarding and encouraging excellent teaching. As a result, the best teachers often accept promotions into administration, and an important resource is lost to the classroom and the profession. Board certification can provide an incentive for these teachers to stay in the classroom where they can go on giving kids the benefit of their knowledge and skill—and where they can help other teachers improve the way they teach.

But board certification is only half the story. The other half depends on what school districts do. Will they recognize the achievement of teachers who gain the certification by offering them higher salaries? Will they seek them out when they are looking for new teachers? Will they see certification as an important professional achievement and offer these teachers responsibilities commensurate with their expertise?

Hiring new teachers is, to a large extent, a question of supply and demand. It is dependent on things over which a district may have little control—the number of students who will be showing up next year and the availability of teachers. But retaining excellent teachers depends on recognizing who they are and giving them adequate financial and professional incentives. The National Board gives us a way of identifying outstanding teachers. This could be a turning point for the profession. But it depends on what happens next.

Mr. Shanker's comments appear in this ad under the auspices of the American Federation of Teachers. Reader correspondence is invited. Address your letters to Mr. Shanker at the AFT, 555 New Jersey Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001. © 1995 by Albert Shanker.

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

FEBRUARY 6, 1995

TRAINING WHEELS

When Bill Clinton, with the help of Robert Reich, made worker retraining the signature theme of Clinton's 1992 campaign, he was reacting to the dim job prospects that low-skill laborers face in America. A quintessential New Democrat proposal, the idea was to let the market operate—but to soften the blow on redundant workers by preparing them for higher-skill jobs. It was a response to growing unease about inequality in an increasingly unequal economy; it held out hope that, even in the face of vast economic and social change, the government could still do something to ease workers' insecurity. Yet, after Clinton won, he barely pushed retraining. Like welfare reform, it took the back seat to health care.

Until the midterm elections, that is. On January 10, the president tried to win back his white male constituency by disinterring his retraining theme. This time, it had a more conservative flavor: instead of new programs, Clinton offered "Skill Grants"—training vouchers worth as much as $2,620 per year—for displaced workers to use for themselves in the private sector. So far, so good. The main imponderable is whether the whole idea of retraining actually works in practice; whether any scheme can save many low-skill workers from post-industrial penury.

Yes, there have been some successes. In 1990 a Michigan research institute conducted a survey of state retraining programs. It found an average post-retraining wage gain of 8 percent for men and 34 percent for women. But there's also plenty of counter-evidence. The most applicable recent study was commissioned by the Department of Labor during the Bush administration. They asked Mathematica Policy Research to evaluate a retraining program for high-wage manufacturing workers laid off because of international trade. To avoid any bias in its 1,800-worker sample, it compared workers only after controlling for personal characteristics such as race, sex and education. What seems like the study's main limitation—it studied mostly older workers with long tenure—makes it a good measure of how retraining will help Clinton's target population. Mathematica concluded that trainees were no more likely to be employed and earned no more on average than non-trainees. Granted, about 85 percent of re-employed trainees had taken entry-level jobs in new industries, but about 70 percent of non-trainees made the same move. A second study by the Michigan institute reached the same sad conclusion.

Differences in design might explain why some training programs seem to work better than others. James Heckman, a University of Chicago economist, believes that the on-the-job training and displaced worker retraining programs that focus on young people produce higher returns than those that include everyone. Unfortunately, he estimates that providing enough training for all workers to attain a 1979 wage level would cost the government $1.7 trillion. The administration hopes its voucher scheme could provide more training less bureaucratically. The trouble here is, as the Progressive Policy Institute's Kathleen Sylvester notes, many of the most successful programs involve a high level of government hand-holding. Surveying the experts on this matter is, in any case, a bewildering exercise. There's no consensus on what the details of an ideal training program should be.

There's not even agreement on whether training should be a continuous process conducted by private companies and subsidized by the government, or whether it should be restricted to displaced workers in between jobs. Reich marvels at the Western European model, and favors the former approach. The lack of such skills training, he contends, has hampered American industry and worsened inequality. More prosaic types view the problem as a simpler, structural one: how to link up displaced workers more efficiently with new jobs. They point out that many traditional industries, with little in the way of retraining and much in the way of inflexible work patterns, are among the most productive in the American economy. They also note that Volvo's famous Uddevalla plant, the prototype for the continuous training workplace Reich admires, was shut down for inefficiency in 1991. All that's needed, the skeptics argue, is fine-tuning.

Because the evidence for Reich's view is far from overwhelming, it's no tragedy that his grandest proposal, a 0.2 percent payroll tax to fund continuous training (not just the retraining of displaced workers) was removed from the failed Reemployment Act of 1994 before the bill even reached full committee. In his first two years, Reich rightly focused on smaller initiatives where no sig-

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nificant disputes exist. Many of the people who end up in training programs never acquired basic academic skills in grade school, or at least never learned how to apply them to their jobs. One successful Labor-supported bill reserves $100 million for experimental efforts to make high school relevant to the world of work. Another pilot project devotes $25.5 million to the creation of one-stop computerized job search centers in unemployment offices.

The president now has more on his agenda. "We discovered that we could collapse fifty of these programs and just give you the money if you're eligible for it, and it would make people who are eligible able to get a chit, a voucher for education only," he argued last week. The first part—consolidation—makes sense. Last year the General Accounting Office counted 154 federal job training programs, many of which were tiny and defended only by public-employee unions. Reich told THE NEW REPUBLIC just before the midterm election that consolidating them was unimportant as long as the unemployed worker using the one-stop job center couldn't tell the difference. Afterward, Bill Goodling, the Republican who chairs the House Economic and Educational Opportunities Committee, made it clear that his interest in worker retraining was limited to eliminating programs, and the administration quickly caught on.

But simply providing vouchers indiscriminately might well be destructive. According to Gary Burtless of the Brookings Institution, pure voucher programs *reduce* earnings among the people to whom they are offered. The target population for worker retraining is composed disproportionately of high school dropouts—people shortsighted enough to pass up a free public education. "It's an awfully heroic assumption that they're going to spend money wisely," Burtless says. He has a point. Much of the money saved by consolidation should be devoted to guidance services and vouchers targeted at those populations most likely to benefit from them. This is not as hard as it sounds. Maryland's Division of Employment and Training is experimenting with computer software that uses educational, work and welfare histories to identify those displaced workers who would most benefit from retraining. According to Paul Osterman of MIT, narrow-tailoring is the first criterion that determines whether any training program will succeed. Oddly, in the new Clinton plan, the dollar value of the voucher is set—but so far the eligibility rules aren't.

In all this, however, it's important to recognize that even the most effective retraining measure won't solve the trauma of social and economic transformation. Clinton should be honest about this. Yes, we should do what we can to help displaced workers learn the skills to find new and better jobs. But this exercise won't save us from economic insecurity, and it won't flatten social and economic inequality. By overselling retraining, Clinton could face a backlash among the very middle class he hopes to regain. Better to hold back and experiment—and establish worker retraining as the potent little treatment it might yet become instead of the panacea it clearly isn't. •

NOTEBOOK

SIC TRANSIT: Malcolm X's daughter Qubilah Bahiyah Shabazz was indicted for allegedly trying to hire a hit man to assassinate Louis Farrakhan. After meeting with Martin Luther King Jr.'s son, Jack Soden, CEO of Elvis Presley Enterprises, said, "There's a distinct difference in the role Martin Luther King played in society and Elvis the entertainer ... but the basic mechanisms of protecting, guarding and nurturing the value of the name, image and likeness are the same." A crowd estimated at 4 million people attended papal Mass in Manila, where the pontiff participated in a "wave of love," a stadium-style arm-raising ritual. *The Washington Post* reported that "it is not unusual for Hillary Clinton to end a conversation with a staff member by uttering 'Okey-dokey, artichokey.' " The Post Office revealed that it had 28.2 million postcards and 9.2 million envelopes prepared for the January 1 rate change. The materials were locked in an underground vault in Kansas City in order to prevent their sale to customers. Conny Hamzy of Arkansas, the "Sweet Sweet Conny" celebrated in song by Grand Funk Railroad in 1973, was fined for exposing herself in public. CBS broadcast House Speaker Newt Gingrich's father spitting chewing tobacco into a sink. Bill Clinton's horoscope said, "Grand opportunity gradually slips away—unless you fight for your rights."

DO AS I SAY, NOT AS I WRITE: For a man who established himself by haughtily condemning the ethical lapses of others, Newt Gingrich is rather cavalier about his own questionable behavior. Since becoming House speaker, he has deftly used his power to forestall the ongoing ethics investigation into the shadowy financing of his T.V. college course. Gingrich has yet to appoint members to the Committee on Standards and Official Conduct, the panel that will sit in judgment of him. Of course, if the roles were reversed, he would doubtless be arguing that a mere Ethics Committee review is too good for a defiant speaker. Gingrich would have us forget how in 1988, hell-bent on bringing down House Speaker Jim Wright over suspicious book royalties, he circulated a letter demanding that an independent counsel be hired to investigate. "The rules normally applied by the Ethics Committee to an investigation of a typical member are insufficient in an investigation of the speaker of the House," Gingrich wrote. "Clearly, this investigation has to meet higher standards of public accountability and integrity." All in favor, say aye.

LOGROLLING WATCH: At first glance, *The Washington Post*'s coverage of Oprah Winfrey's on-air confession that she had smoked cocaine in her early 20s would seem a case study of the tabloidization of

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journalism. ("OPRAH WINFREY ADMITS DRUG USE," squealed the front-page headline on January 13.) Since when is anyone's admission of drug use twenty years ago big news? Well, things become clearer when you find out that *Post* reporter Patrice Gaines played a starring role in the Oprah event. Gaines, on tour promoting her recent book, *Laughing in the Dark* (which, the *Post* tells us, "chronicles her journey from jail and abuse to self-acceptance"), appeared on the show in which Winfrey made her admission. As the front-page story put it, "Another guest, *Washington Post* reporter Patrice Gaines, who has written a book about her own troubled life, said yesterday that during her own period of drug abuse she had been 'addicted to the man, not the drugs' (Related story p. B1)." In the B1 story, Gaines gushes, "I don't think my words healed Oprah Winfrey ... I believe she chose to be healed." But the logrolling wasn't over. On January 17, in a piece called "Patrice takes Oprah to Church," *Post* columnist Donna Britt recounted her "awe that the presence of my friend, fellow *Washington Post* writer Patrice Gaines, helped spark [Oprah's] admission." Britt said Winfrey and Gaines were like "folks serious about making the world more livable.... What such people do through their jobs, their child-raising, their everyday example is what Patrice is trying to do through her writing. And it's what Oprah ... is striving for on her show."

WHISPER TO ME WHAT NEWT THINKS ABOUT EVA BRAUN.
CONNIE
CHRISTINA JEFFREY The 60-minute historian
TOLES ©1995 THE NEW REPUBLIC
EVA WHO?
OK, WHAT DOES HE SAY ABOUT ME?

KING DING: If Coretta Scott King and her son Dexter, a rap promoter and businessman, bid to build a $60 million Disney-style for-profit theme park on the exact site where the U.S. Park Service runs the popular King historic district, well, good for them. But the family is not battling "the same evil forces that killed Martin Luther King Jr. and are now trying to destroy his family," as Dexter claims. Of all the cheesy aspects of their venture, likening Atlanta park rangers to the KKK is the one that most cheapens King's struggle.

METAPHOR CLINIC ALERT: "Our dealings with North Korea today are a bit like playing poker with a man whose face you can never see, so you never know whether he is bluffing, nervous, honest looking or relieved. You don't even know if he is the same man playing every hand. All you have to go on is the cards he puts on the table. The temptation in such a frustrating game is to take your chips and go home. After all, who wants to play poker with a faceless partner? I would if I were winning.... You don't get up from a poker game in which you are winning just because the person whose money you are taking steps on your toes.... We're not playing cards out here with the Sisters of Mercy.... The minute the North stops paying in nuclear coinage, then by all means let's kick over the table.... But lest the Clinton team get too cocky with its winnings in Pyongyang Poker, a word of caution: 'Yes, you are winning, but you are doing it with someone else's chips.' "
—Thomas Friedman, *The New York Times*, January 4

HELLO...: We are pleased to announce that Luc Sante will become our photography critic. He's the author of *Low Life* (Vintage) and *Evidence* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux). We're also proud to welcome Sean Wilentz and Alan Wolfe, two names long familiar in our pages, to the ranks of our contributing editors. Wilentz, professor of history and Cotsen Fellow at Princeton University, is co-author most recently of *The Kingdom of Matthias* (Oxford University Press). Wolfe is professor of sociology at Boston University. His most recent book is *The Human Difference* (University of California Press), and he is now at work on a book about middle-class morality.

AND FAREWELL...: This is Executive Editor David Shipley's last issue. For almost two years, David has been a brilliant, innovative shaper of TNR, for two months last summer as acting editor. He leaves to write a book on fatherhood (and to become a father). He'll be succeeded by Margaret Talbot, former editor of *Lingua Franca*. •

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Going to church in the West Village.

WAVERLY WAFERS

By Brad Gooch

A fine gray rain fell continuously during a recent "Twenty-Second Sunday after Pentecost" at St. John's in the Village, an Episcopal church at 224 Waverly Place in Manhattan's West Village. Normally, such a rain would be a distant *ping* in a more traditional Tiffany's stained-glass-window sanctuary. But this parish lost its nineteenth-century jewel box in a fire in 1971. For its replacement it hired an associate of Frank Lloyd Wright's to build an angular bricky statement—more successful than most—with lots of touches of what's called "indoor-outdoor" in California. Sixties-think is especially palpable in its long, thin windows, as opaque as wax paper, through which cars and passersby register steadily as filmy mirages.

Start-up for the Sunday service included a Couperin "Benedictus" played on a pipe organ with a stop obviously pushed or pulled to simulate a harpsichord. Player and organ were stashed—along with a choir of ten—in a balcony. A cozy congregation of about fifty sat in sixteen rows (eight on each side of an aisle) on squat wooden chairs upholstered in faded raspberry-peach fabric and linked by single beams into pews. The Scandinavian feel of the wood along with a gray slate floor and an A-frame brick wall at the front gave the sort of spare pleasure of a desirable one-bedroom in the neighborhood.

Five to ten minutes before 11 o'clock, the congregation began to shuffle in. Many of the men wore khakis and tweed jackets. At least a dozen parishioners wore eyeglasses with clear or wire frames. A white-haired lady never removed her shiny green raincoat. Two women sat together, the one's hand on her companion's back. What appeared to be a husband put his hand on his wife's back. (Two little girls joined them after 10:45 church school.) One overactive yellow-haired teenager, sitting with his mom, looked the part of a tousled prince of the House of Windsor. A sickly Asian American gentleman was wheeled by in a wheelchair, his gaze cocked toward the ceiling. The entire group could have been transported quite believably to a small academic town in New England.

In the entrance procession, a flat Orthodox-style crucifix was carried tiltingly from rear to front, as many curtly bowed their heads. The hymn was the upbeat eighteenth-century "Bangor"—"O very God of very God and very Light of Light"—soon followed by the "Trisagion," a Russian Orthodox psalm of praise composed by Archangelsky that was added to the Episcopal Prayer Book in 1979. The pastor, the Rev. Lloyd Prator, descended to the middle of the aisle to read from the Gospel, which was covered in red and gold padding. The book was censed. Many mini-crossed themselves three times: at forehead, heart and lips. In his sermon, the priest described the disciples as "the densest group of guys.... They were the gang who couldn't think straight."

After updating the language, he then tried to update the thinking with nuances from modern psychotherapy. (St. John's houses and sponsors a Pastoral Counseling Center.) He interpreted blindness as "a point of need," "a paralysis," a time when "we let down our defenses." He talked of "insight" as the moment we reassess our habitual responses to "that certain female authority figure" or to "how we feel when subtly put down by someone."

The less topical, more ancient thinking of the Eucharist took up the rest of the hour. Peace was exchanged among the parishioners, mostly by handshakes and a murmured "Peace." As straw baskets were passed at the Offertory, a baritone sang John Rutter's "Open Thou My Eyes," a tune along the lines of "Go Tell It on the Mountain." At the moment of transubstantiation of matter into spirit, Father Prator raised a cup of burgundy wine and a silver plate of wafers of unleavened bread made by the nuns of the Community of St. Mary in Peekskill, New York, while hand-bells were rung shimmeringly. After singing *The Lord's Prayer* and the response, "Whoever eats this bread will live forever," the members of the congregation walked forward, surrounding the dais on three sides, to receive Communion in two shifts. "The body of Christ, the bread of heaven," said the priest with the silver paten. "The blood of Christ, the cup of salvation," said another holding the silver chalice. When the wine was presented, most drank holding the stem of the cup; some handed their wafers to the priest to be dipped; a few crossed their arms over their chest to indicate they chose to pass.

Coffee hour was held for about fifteen minutes in an adjoining common room, a wide hallway with huge windows that looked out on the dampened parish garden, a *Secret Garden* conglomeration of ivy-covered walls, purple and pink flowers, cobbled walkways leading on all sides to Federal row houses unluckily sold by the parish before the real estate boom of the 1980s. One young man who worked for the designer Todd Oldham and who was wearing a crucifix made of black stones admitted he had been shopping for a parish. "This to me has been the friendliest," he said. The shopper shared his sense that spirituality was trending up. "Well, it's the end of a millennium," he said. "So maybe there's an apocalyptic feeling. Also, among gay men, there's more of an interest. When I found out I was HIV-positive, that's the moment I changed."

He was joined by another young man, very hail-fellow-well-met, checking to see if he were planning to come to his Bible classes beginning in Advent.

"Have you heard *Vision*?" the teacher asked. "The new Hildegard Von Bingen C.D.?"

"Who's she? An opera singer?"

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"No. She's a twelfth-century German mystic."

Standing a plate glass window away from their reddish garden needled by rain, the parishioners chatted in rising and falling voices with each other, and with Father Prator, who had reappeared in a black clasped cape. Talk of spoken word C.D.s and sexual politics aside, the moment was very Barbara Pym.

BRAD GOOCH is the author of *City Poet: The Life and Times of Frank O'Hara* (HarperPerennial paperback). This is the first in a series of occasional pieces about religious services.

Mexico, si. Russia, nyet.

CRASH OF NATIONS

By Jeffrey Sachs

Bill Clinton justified his $40 billion loan guarantee to Mexico with the thought that America must continue to lead the world. The collapse of Russia's reforms in the ashes of Grozny mocks those words. While it took the United States less than two weeks to commit more than $40 billion of credit lines to Mexico, we failed to supply even one-tenth that amount in loans, loan guarantees and grants to Russia's reformers during the past three years. Aid to Russia was surely vital for our security and foreign policy goals, and was justifiable by the same logic as the Mexican package. But for Russia, which has plunged into civil violence and now teeters on dictatorship, we heard only the bipartisan foreign policy bleating that there is simply no money, or, as George Bush memorably put it in 1989, "We have more will than wallet."

The contrast between Mexico and Russia speaks volumes about the degradation of our foreign policy during the past two administrations. The alacrity of the Mexican bailout, in contrast to the neglect of Russia, is largely a result of the baying of the New York financial community, incensed that it had lost some $10 billion to $15 billion in the collapse of the Mexico peso last December. The money men demanded that the White House and Congress stanch the losses, and the political leadership immediately heard the message. Even Congress's strongest foes of foreign aid, ever mindful of real politics and campaign financing, immediately jumped on board.

The case for a well-designed bailout package for Mexico is real, even if aid is being spurred by sore losers in the financial community. A well-designed aid package will help to stabilize the Mexican economy, and international capital markets more generally, at low cost (or even no cost) to the U.S. budget. Of course, the over-eager Clinton administration could still spoil the Mexican package if it simply forks over the money without strong conditionality on Mexico's financial policies, or if it goes overboard to try to save the bankers, rather than Mexico, at taxpayers' risk.

Russia's tragedy is that no investment banker's Christmas bonus has ever depended on Russia's financial stability. As economic adviser to Russia until I resigned in frustration in January 1994, I described at painstaking length to Washington, the IMF and the World Bank the logic of a package of financial guarantees for Russia along the lines of the Mexican package. I argued that a government in financial distress needs backstopping in the form of long-term loans or loan guarantees, so that it can roll over its debts, meet crucial payrolls and re-establish its creditworthiness without a financial meltdown. I warned that a currency, such as the Russian ruble or Mexican peso, that lacks external backing can produce a vicious circle of depreciation, inflation and political instability, as a result of a self-fulfilling panic in the financial markets.

All the while, I was met with blank stares from U.S. administration officials, international bureaucrats at the IMF and World Bank, and most with whom I spoke in Congress. Turbulent markets, I was told repeatedly, simply reflect understandable doubts of investors. If a currency is falling, the government needs a change of policy, certainly not a foreign loan guarantee. Leading economists at the World Bank lectured me that the most important thing in an aid program is to avoid giving money too *soon*, lest it be wasted. Anyway, practical people "knew" there was simply no money available in an era of pinched budgets in all the leading countries. Somehow, we have found $40 billion of loan guarantees for Mexico in the year of the balanced budget amendment.

In 1992, the fateful first year of Russian democracy, the Yeltsin reform cabinet was left naked to destabilizing market forces, with creditors unwilling to roll over old Soviet debts or to extend new loans to the Russian government. With the short-term bills on the old debts rapidly piling up, zero foreign reserves and the IMF's rejection of Yegor Gaidar's urgent request for a $6 billion ruble stabilization fund and other credits, it is no wonder Russians fled their currency, just as the U.S. Treasury feared would happen in Mexico if we failed to give aid.

With the new Russian government against the wall, Russian money-holders and enterprises adopted four rules of behavior that eventually toppled the reforms. First, hold dollars, not rubles. Second, refuse to buy Russian government bonds except at loan-shark rates, since the old Soviet debts are piling up and the government can't find international backers. Third, withhold tax payments, since delays in tax payments are tantamount to tax cuts when the currency is rapidly losing its value. Fourth, count on the reform cabinet to fall. Without backstopping from the outside world, Gaidar's days were numbered. Military-industrial enterprises could bide their time, leaving their bills unpaid, until the reform government was toppled. Sure enough, by December 1992, it was.

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Those who think this outcome was inevitable understand little about actual Russian politics or basic economics in that crucial year. The budget deficit was actually manageable at the start, before three years of political instability took their toll on tax evasion and subsidies. Russia's foreign debts as a percentage of national income were about the same as in Mexico. The reformers had the support of the people, especially as goods poured back into the shops in early 1992 as a result of market reforms. Yeltsin had vastly more authority than the hard-line opposition, which was wrong-footed by the failed hard-line coup in 1991 and was reeling from Yeltsin's thrusts. Under these conditions, Western guarantees could have sustained the Russian reforms, perhaps not for free (as *might* be the case in Mexico), but at least at a price that would have been one of the great bargains of history.

The Clinton administration carried on the immobilism of Bush and James Baker, missing other chances for financial stabilization in 1993 and perhaps in 1994 (though by then most of the reformers had departed). Yes, Clinton promoted more aid than Bush, but still in amounts too small to be consequential. With each downward turn of politics and finance in Russia, our policymakers have responded with relentless Polyannaish good cheer. After all, Russia must be described as a great U.S. foreign policy success! Each new apparatchik, we're told, is really a reformer in disguise.

Even the recent transfer of effective political power in Russia from democratic institutions to a new politburo, known as the Russian Security Council, seems a mere detail to the State Department. The disastrous and savage Russian attacks in Chechnya, orchestrated by the Security Council, are treated as a footnote. The new privatization minister, who has banished foreign advisers and called for re-nationalizing industry, is really inconsequential.

The costs to us of Russia's retreat from reforms are mounting and will likely rise much higher. Russia has already severely hobbled the Western response to Bosnia. It has stalled the incorporation of Central Europe into NATO. It has increasingly bullied its next-door neighbors, undercutting their prospects of attracting foreign investment. It has agreed to complete a new and dangerous Iranian nuclear plant, despite U.S. protests. Ironically, increases in defense spending in the United States as a result of rising tensions could now amount to several times the money that should have been devoted to aid.

Sadly, the case for aid to Russia is gone for the present, despite the protestations of the administration, which now seems suddenly eager to lend money after years of neglect. We should surely wait to see the political and financial fallout of the Russian war before acting. It would be ludicrous to give aid that would serve to bolster the Russian Security Council or pay for the destruction of Chechnya. We should instead prepare for another chance to help Russian reformers in the future, and use the time to reflect on the havoc that the Bush-Clinton foreign policy has helped to bring about.

JEFFREY SACHS is a professor of economics at Harvard.

PORT-AU-PRINCE POSTCARD

THE COMEDIAN

By Anna Husarska

The new Haitian Police Academy did not need to woo any candidates: the mere announcement that recruiting would start was such a draw that American soldiers had to intervene and tame the 8,000-strong crowd that showed up at the Ministry of Justice. Afraid that a riot might develop, the soldiers shot pepper spray into the crowd and hosed it with fire extinguishers. And this turnout was only to get on the list; screening of the candidates, through intelligence and physical tests, will come later. Then, after the final cuts, teachers from France, Canada and the United States will lead courses for the rookies. Although the program should take four months, it could be halved in order to get new officers on the unruly streets as soon as possible. Each month 375 trainees will be admitted. The target is to have 4,000 cops by February 1996.

It is difficult to imagine a worse host to such quasi-riotous recruiting than Minister of Justice Ernst Mallebranche, who presides from his gingerbread mansion in downtown Port-au-Prince. At 75, the generally intolerant Mallebranche looks down at most of his compatriots as riffraff. On the door to his office hangs a handwritten note demanding "proper dress" for anyone meeting with the minister. (I learned that he means it: no man has ever had such an emotional reaction to my knees. His secretary was reprimanded for even letting me in.) This etiquette obsession is the best-known fact about Mallebranche, mainly because he has not distinguished himself in any other way.

Supporters praise the minister by pointing out the lack of certain defects: "He is incorruptible and he is not stupid." I would add that he is elegant, has a comedian's talent and speaks a refined French. All of this, though, does not make him fit to be a minister.

Monsieur le Ministre is devoid of any organizational or managerial skills, according to a report by a foreign government organization; he hid behind the constitution when I asked about reforms; and he seems overwhelmed by his stated tasks. He uses his comedian's talent to act as he imagines a minister should act, but it yields clownish results: during a public meeting at the local tribunal in the town of Hinche, I saw him accuse (in his florid French) a local judge of being a modern-era *macoutiste*, then listen to the judge's self-defense, and then, ten seconds later, retract his accusation. After this farce, I asked some youths gathered outside the building what they thought of Mallebranche; shrugging was the

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softest comment I got. In Mirebalais, another town in Haiti's central plateau, Mallebranche swore in as a local justice a man with notorious links to the anti-Aristide paramilitary group known as FRAPH.

He may be just starting to have a sense of urgency about a reform of the justice system, teaching of investigation techniques and changes in the penitentiary system. Unfortunately, he fired Eva Tabuteau, the director of the ministry's justice department, who had concrete projects for all of the above. Her strong credentials—specifically that she had worked under Guy Malary, a widely respected minister of justice who was assassinated in October of 1993—did not seem to matter to Mallebranche. Tabuteau is now a legal adviser to the prime minister.

Mallebranche's own grasp of current justice issues is marginal. When I asked him about the most important case since the return of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide—an accusation of attempted murder against the two leaders of FRAPH—all he did was repeat several times that the case was "beyond his control" and sigh. In the three weeks since I spoke with Mallebranche, the case did indeed stretch beyond his control: one of the accused men made it clear he does not intend to return from the Dominican Republic. The other, according to the weekly *Haiti Observateur*, flew to Washington "on just another normal Christmastime visit to relatives." (Or perhaps he was collecting a lost check. The man, Emmanuel "Toto" Constant, thought to be responsible for murdering several people during the de facto military regime, was on the CIA's payroll as recently as last spring.) So now, even though nineteen people testified against the two FRAPH-istes, it is almost certain that justice will never reach them.

My other question to Mallebranche concerned the creation of a Truth Commission, a crucial element in President Aristide's pledge for justice and reconciliation. "Truth Commission?" His eyebrows met in a theatrical frown: he vaguely remembered that he had signed a decree on some such thing two days earlier, but he couldn't recall the name of the person who was nominated to lead it, nor could he say anything about the commission's charge.

All human rights groups, Haitian and foreign, consider the establishment of such a commission, along the lines of the one in El Salvador, a top priority. The panel would investigate claims of human rights violations, giving people a chance to testify on the abuses they experienced; it would then establish a record for later prosecutions. There is ample *knowledge* of the atrocities committed in the past three years; the number of victims murdered is estimated at 3,000, tens of thousands more have been beaten or tortured. But a Truth Commission report would mean the *acknowledgment* of those crimes. Such recognition may not vindicate the reputation of the victims, but it would at least bestow some dignity on them.

"A truth commission buys time by dealing with what the justice system in its present state would not be able to handle," says a foreign human rights expert working in Haiti. "It prevents the simple introduction of 'victor's justice.' " This may not necessarily be witch-hunting; in Haiti, gossip often replaces hard information, and rumors that "people know" may be a substitute for hard evidence. Scrupulous investigation is imperative.

The commission will not be starting from scratch. There already exists a database of human rights violations from February 1993 to July 1994: hundreds of cases have been documented (with interviews, site visits, depositions, etc.) by civilian observers from a joint Organization of American States/U.N. human rights project. This watchdog team debuted in February 1993. Its members then studied Creole, Haitian history, politics and culture and investigative reporting skills; and by October 1993 the group had deployed 206 monitors of fifty-five nationalities all over the country. Evacuated for political reasons and then expelled, the mission is now reopening its regional offices. It is headed by Colin Granderson, a diplomat from Trinidad, and its human rights director is Ian Martin of Britain, formerly secretary-general of Amnesty International.

I watched this mission in action in March 1993 ("The Waiting," TNR, May 10, 1993). At the time, it seemed that, in a hostile environment of military rulers, without any reform of the police and without any force to impose law and order, the lonely foreign observers armed with yellow legal pads on which to scribble denunciations served little purpose. But the monitors turned out to be more than a bridgehead. Now, with the new police academy and the American soldiers trying to establish a "stable and secure environment," the mission may help instill some meaning to the words "Haitian justice," pace Monsieur le Ministre and his etiquette. •

Michigan's phony welfare numbers.

COMPLEAT ENGLER

By David Whitman

From the Sunday morning talk shows to the nightly news, it's hard these days to avoid the rotund, assured visage of Michigan Governor John Engler. When President Clinton convenes his upcoming White House summit on welfare reform, Engler will be leading the powerful bloc of Republican governors who urge turning the funding for public assistance over to the states. His solution to the welfare mess, as he told the Washington press corps last year, is to "free the states to implement the changes

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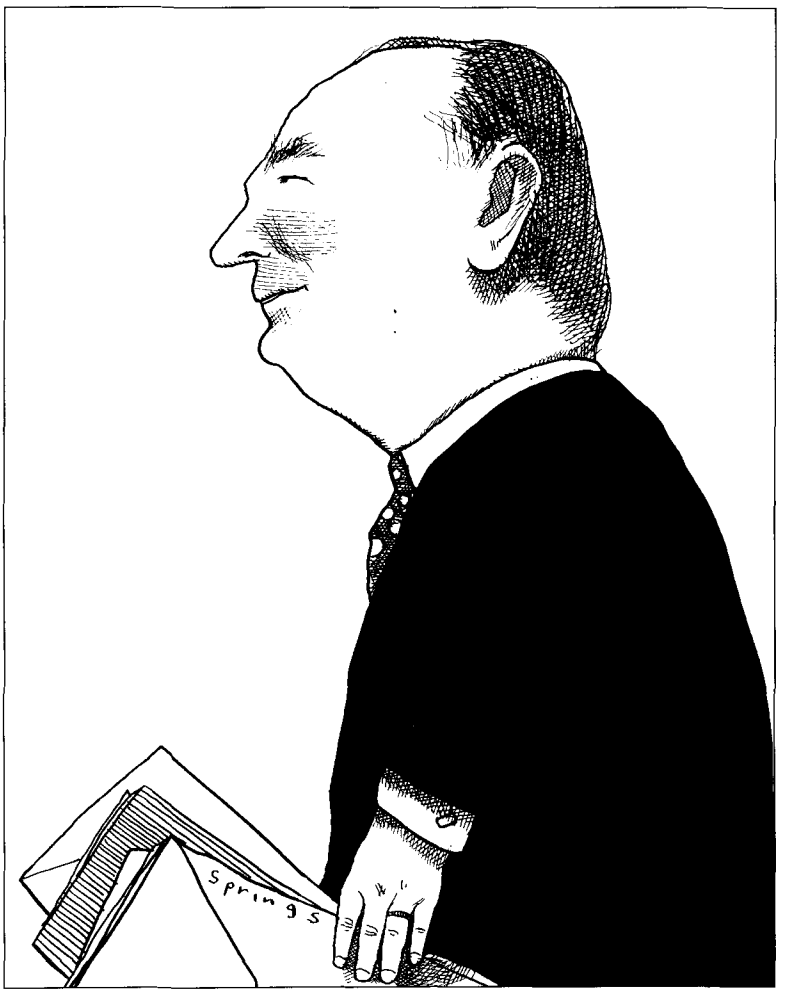
they want. It's that simple—just do it." In the last three years Engler has received two series of waivers from the federal government that have enabled him to start applying his "just do it" philosophy to the Aid to Families with Dependent Children program (AFDC). Now, he vouches, "welfare reform means work" in Michigan. "There is no doubt," he told Congress on January 13, "that Michigan's reform plan could serve as a model for the nation."

To date, the press has largely echoed Engler's claims about Michigan's welfare-to-work program. From the tabloids ("MICHIGAN SAVES MILLIONS WITH WORKFARE," headlined *The New York Post*) to highbrow conservative journals (*Policy Review* dubbed Engler "Michigan's Welfare Abolitionist"), the governor has been celebrated. But a closer look at his record shows that his reforms have failed to shrink significantly the number of families on AFDC. In fact, Engler doesn't seem to believe that welfare mothers should be required to work off their benefits in exchange for their grants; in September of last year, for example, less than 1 percent of the more than 200,000 adults on AFDC in Michigan were toiling in workfare jobs. And, despite Engler's claims, only about one in four AFDC parents in the state participates in the state's welfare-to-work program during a typical month—and most of those who do are taking courses or are being assessed by caseworkers so they can prepare to find a job.



DRAWING BY JOHN SPRINGS FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Michigan's first round of waivers had two core provisions when it was introduced statewide in 1992. First, all AFDC applicants (and subsequently all adults on AFDC) were asked to sign a "social contract," a promise to engage in some "productive effort" for twenty hours a week. Work, training and school counted toward that goal, but so did loosely monitored community activities such as checking a book out of the library or meeting with a child's teacher. The waiver program also boosted work incentives by allowing recipients to keep the first $200 a month of gross earnings plus 20 percent of the rest of their wages without having their welfare grant reduced.

Earlier this month, Engler told a congressional subcommittee that the results of the 1992 reform have been "very impressive." He pointed out that a little more than one-quarter of parents on AFDC in Michigan (26 percent in December) now work at least part time each month, up from 16 percent in 1992 when his program started. By comparison, says Engler, only about 8 percent of adults on welfare nationwide work part time.

Even if these numbers were accurate, they would mean that three in four adults on AFDC in his state are not working. But it is likely that the reported rise in part-time work is overstated. Most welfare mothers conceal income they receive from odd jobs. It may be that, as the state changed the eligibility rules, some of these women felt more comfortable reporting their earnings to authorities but did not boost their actual work hours. Also, the Michigan economy has boomed since 1992, so the rise could reflect simply an increase in job opportunities for AFDC recipients.

A new evaluation by Abt Associates Inc. that took account of some of these complications shows that the first-year impacts of Engler's program were negligible. The Abt study, commissioned by the state, randomly assigned nearly 14,000 AFDC recipients into either a treatment group that operated under the post-waiver guidelines or a control group subject to pre-waiver policies. It found that after a year, Engler's initiative increased the proportion of adults combining work and welfare by just 1.7 percentage points and reduced the welfare rolls by one percentage point. Even if Engler's program quadrupled its impact in its second year, the overall increase in work would be modest.

Engler has also suggested that his 1992 initiative moved tens of thousands of AFDC recipients off the welfare rolls. Testifying before a packed congressional hearing, Engler said that "in the last year alone, more than 25,000 cases [in Michigan] have been closed due to income from employment, and welfare caseloads have fallen to the lowest level since 1988." Engler's

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carefully worded testimony fails to mention that the number of families on AFDC in Michigan has remained largely unchanged since his reforms began. With or without government assistance, women often, at some point, leave welfare for work; what matters most in determining the size of the rolls is how many of those women subsequently go back on public assistance or are replaced by new applicants—and how fast. Even with Michigan's strong economy, Engler's reforms did little to curb dependency. In 1992, when Engler's initiative began, the average monthly AFDC caseload in Michigan was a little more than 225,000 families; in 1994, just under 224,000. The average number of months families are on AFDC also appears to have held constant, at about thirty-four months.

In addition to its largely voluntary "social contract," Michigan, like other states, operates a mandatory JOBS program, the acronym for the education, training and work programs set up by the 1988 Family Support Act. In September of last year, about 47,000 AFDC recipients were "active" in the state's program. That figure represents 23 percent of the adult caseload, higher than the national average of 17 percent. Still, in a speech last year to the National Press Club, Engler claimed that "Michigan's welfare-to-work training program is now the largest in the nation." It's not. California and Ohio handle about 10,000 more JOBS participants in a given month than Michigan.

Like most states, Michigan has adopted the "human capital development" approach of the left, not the put-'em-to-work approach of House Republicans. Roughly half of JOBS participants in Michigan are in school, and most of the rest are either looking for jobs or developing a plan to find work. Fewer than 1,500 adults in the state's JOBS program (or a little less than 3 percent of the program's participants) are in on-the-job training or community service jobs.

The ironic legacy of Engler's reforms is that he has adopted many of the policies opposed by Ronald Reagan, the conservatives' dole-busting hero. Reagan believed that all able-bodied people on AFDC should be required to work off their grants full time in community service jobs, and one of his first achievements as president was to cut back on "earned income disregards," which allowed AFDC parents to keep a portion of their wages without incurring a grant reduction; to encourage more part-time work, Engler reinstituted and broadened these "disregards." Engler said recently on "Nightline" that a "tremendous percentage" of AFDC parents are now working in Michigan, but the current figure of 26 percent is not much of an increase from 1979. Back then, before Reagan scaled back the earned income disregards, 19 percent of AFDC recipients, in Michigan and nationwide, worked part time.

Most of Engler's changes to AFDC have been pushed by state welfare directors for years. His one radical right-wing reform was to eliminate the state's general assistance program in 1991. Only about half the states have statewide general assistance programs, which provide cash aid primarily to poor adults with no dependent children, a less vulnerable group than AFDC families. A number of states have received waivers to time-limit AFDC benefits in pilot programs for families on welfare, but Michigan is not among them.

So far, Engler's AFDC reforms have had modest success. At worst, they have been ineffectual or benign. But Engler has yet to show that he, or any other governor, can slash the welfare rolls by putting legions of low-income women to work. While Congress mulls turning welfare over to the states, that fact is worth remembering.

DAVID WHITMAN is a senior writer at *U.S. News & World Report.*

Memories of the Tito regime.

MY FATHERLAND

By Slavenka Drakulić

My father was a nobody. He was a poor devil who fought with Tito's partisans in the Second World War. Later on, he joined the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, became an army officer and retired in 1966. His life is not much of a story. Besides, he is dead now. He died in November 1989, just before his world and the ideas he fought for fell apart. Though my father was not an important figure in the *nomenklatura*, he was, in my eyes, guilty of opportunism, of collaboration with a repressive regime and, above all, of silence. But so were almost all of the 20 million people in the former Yugoslavia. So, too, were the 5 million in Croatia.

My father was born in 1922. I have only two photos of him from before the war. One shows him at age 5 with his older brother and his mother. The other picture must have been taken when he was about 15. It's from a family wedding and he's wearing a suit with too-short sleeves—probably borrowed. If these photos have a common theme, it is poverty. My grandfather was a bricklayer who died before his fortieth birthday. My grandmother worked in a factory and sold vegetables she grew on her small piece of land. Still, these limitations did not stop my father from being a spoiled child: he would eat all the food in the house; he would ruin a new pair of shoes playing soccer.

My father became a carpenter, but he did not like the work. Life was somewhere else: downtown, where he could see beautiful houses, cars, good shoes and suits. Then came 1941, and his brother joined the "People's Army." Soon thereafter, my father went into

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the woods himself. I doubt he knew exactly why. He said he joined the partisans so he wouldn't have to serve in the Fascist army of Ante Pavelic's Independent State of Croatia—but that was the right thing to say in those days. Whatever the reason, Tito changed his life.

I never asked about what happened to him during the war. I was born in 1949; everything before that seemed to belong to pre-history. The little I know I learned from my grandmother, who followed her sons and cooked for the partisan army. I know that my father became a *politkom* (commissar in charge of ideological matters); that he was almost executed by his comrades for stealing a piece of cheese from a peasant's house; that he survived typhoid fever and a long march that left most of his battalion dead.

The first photo I have of my father after the war—from 1945—shows a self-assured young man dressed in a shabby uniform. What followed in his life was a mixture of ideology, poverty and opportunism. During the war my father had become a member of the Communist Party and, quite simply, he did not want to return to carpentry. So he went to the military academy and then started a family.

THE AUTHOR'S FATHER, SECOND FROM LEFT, WITH ORANGES.

One of my first memories is of our two-room apartment in Senj, where he was in charge of the army headquarters. Yet another photo reminds me of this time. It's from an Army's Day celebration in either 1953 or 1954. My father is sitting at a table with his colleagues; by now, his uniform is well-tailored and almost elegant. The table is laden with cakes and fruits; this is where I first saw an orange. The mysterious fruit was in the middle of the table, peeled and sliced into pieces. Since then, an orange has always been a symbol of wealth to me.

The acquisitions continued. We bought our first record player in 1963, our first T.V. in 1965. In the '70s, we got a car: a used V.W. Rabbit. My parents also started to build a weekend house. Despite all this, my father had become disappointed in the socialist dream. He used to say that the problem wasn't the system but wrong people in the wrong places doing the wrong things. He may have thought this. But it is possible, too, that he was just paying lip service to a system in which he had never really believed. Whatever the reason, just as my father had become dissatisfied with the condition of Tito's dream, I had become dissatisfied with my father.

I was not a Communist. In fact, I became a staunch anti-Communist because of what I interpreted as my father's staunch communism, but see now as his opportunism. His authoritarian nature even drove me to run away from home, an act for which he never forgave me. We didn't have much of a chance to talk to each other before he died.

My father was buried in a small graveyard on an island in the northern Adriatic. On his tombstone, under his name, is an engraved star. My mother instructed a mason to carve it there because my father had been a Communist and anti-Fascist; the star was a part of his life.

Recently, however, when I visited his grave with my mother, I noticed that the star had been covered with a wreath of flowers. At first I thought it was an accident. But, when I removed the wreath because it looked worn out, my mother put it back again without a word. Only then did I understand: lately, people had been demolishing partisan monuments, changing names of streets, renouncing their Communist pasts. Already some graves had been desecrated, people had been evicted from military apartments, widows of former Yugoslav Federal Army officers had been threatened. The ideological "cleansing" was under way. In the new dictionary of political correctness, the recent Communist past in Yugoslavia was nothing but a "bloody dictatorship." My father's tombstone was also the only one with a star instead of a cross. What could she do but cover it up?

I thought her gesture pathetic, for everyone in the small town had seen the star. Yet I could not help but identify my mother's act with what is going on in our society today, with the manner in which we relate to our past. My father does not deserve to have the star on his tomb covered—nor does my mother deserve that kind of fear in the new Croatian state. They lived their lives like most other people, sharing in and benefiting from the accepted ideologies of the time.

I also think that my father doesn't deserve this kind of denial because he, with hundreds of thousands of others, was part of the anti-Fascist movement that in the Second World War saved Europe from Nazism. The star under his name stands for that, too.

But it is precisely because my father participated in creating communism in Yugoslavia that his memory is disappearing together with the political system itself.

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You don't need to be a Communist to feel that there is injustice being done. If we remember the drawbacks of life in Yugoslavia during the past forty years, perhaps we also should have the guts to remember the good things: such as a standard of living much higher than in the rest of the Communist states. We had refrigerators and washing machines when others did not. We had the freedom to travel abroad, see American movies, buy graduation dresses in Milan or spend summer holidays in Greece or Spain. No one who knows what he is talking about will tell you that Yugoslavia under Tito was as totalitarian as its Communist sister states.

One of the most beautiful squares in Zagreb still bears Tito's name. I say still because it is only a matter of time before it will be changed. Two years ago the Commission for the Renaming of Streets proposed that it should be named after Ante Pavelic. But someone on the city council—or even much higher up—decided that it would be too overt an act of rehabilitation for the late Fascist leader. Certainly it would harm the image of newly independent Croatia. So the change was postponed for better times. But don't doubt for a moment that Tito will lose his lovely square.

Meanwhile, the Fascist period—which, to complicate matters, is considered the first Croatian independent state, even though it was a Nazi puppet state—is being rehabilitated in quieter ways. There's the celebration on April 10, the day Fascist Croatia was founded in 1941. Croatian army brigades are named after Ustashe war criminals; graffiti in Split reads "DEATH TO THE JEWS" (it has been there for a year now); the currency has returned to the name it had under fascism: the kuna.

Truth be told, Tito had far too many streets, squares, schools and bridges named after him. And, as we all know, the denial of memory has had a long history in what was Yugoslavia. There is a deeply rooted disease of repetition, the conviction that history is nothing but a washing machine: throw in your dirty laundry, add a little ideology as detergent and out comes a clean shirt, ready to wear until it gets dirty again.

The same feeling I experienced at my father's grave comes over me when I stand in what was previously known as the Square of Victims of Fascism, and is now called the Square of Croatia's Great Men. The square is anchored at its north end by a grim five-story building, a Fascist prison where thousands of people were tortured. In a way, the square is a symbolic graveyard not only for fascism's victims, but for any illusions that were once held about the new government: in spite of all protests, the square was robbed of its name. Standing there, I feel as if I'll never have a chance to grow up because history is closing yet another chapter on me.

I have another memory of my father, and this one is not from a photo. When I was 10 and my brother was 5, we found a pistol hidden in a cupboard in our house. It was wrapped in a piece of flannel and when we unfolded the cloth, there it was, a shining black Beretta. We thought we would play with it a little and then put it back. But just as we were getting started the door opened and my father entered the room. He took the gun away from us, told us never to play with it again. His face was pale, his eyes expressionless. He looked as if he had seen someone he never wanted to see again.

Many times afterward I wanted to ask my father what he had seen at that moment. Death? Had he used that Beretta to kill a man during the war? But I knew that if my father would have answered "yes" to my question, he would never have been the same person in my eyes. I was afraid of the truth. He made it easy for me.

I have a lot of excuses for not having asked questions that I should have asked. I could say that my generation was cynical and apolitical. It would be the truth, but not the whole truth. As in other Communist countries, the Yugoslav gerontocracy infantilized younger generations. Somehow, we were always too young to climb high or to get into responsible positions. We could not even hope to get an apartment of our own. If something went wrong, a father figure was expected to deal with it, not a son. This was the deal: give us a taste of freedom (travel, good clothes, books and records) and we won't make any problems for you. We won't ask unpleasant questions.

I think that the majority of my generation truly believed in oblivion and obedience in exchange for what they thought was a good life. It was opportunism not much different from the opportunism that made my father join the Communist Party. I was arrogant enough to think that a real life in Communist Yugoslavia had nothing to do with my inner self. Only now do I see that the majority of us believed in communism. Infantilized, pampered and bribed, we could not imagine a future in a different society.

The trouble is not that the new government would like to make us all forget the recent past and live happily ever after; it is not even the fact that it is discreetly establishing a link with the Fascist regime. The trouble is that we are showing our tacit acceptance of these changes, as if they had nothing to do with our own lives. Someone is deciding our past and our present again, and we are obeying. There is no other excuse aside from fear. But shouldn't we then ask ourselves about the nature of that fear? Do we dare confess that we are afraid to speak up in democracy, too—and, if so, what kind of democracy is that?

To forget; how sweet it must be to be able to really forget. Tito, of course, was a master at erasing the past. And it was an art he perfected with his death, for his last wish—his sole, final wish—was that his white marble tombstone not have a star engraved on it.

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Breaking the smell barrier.

GET A WHIFF OF THIS

By Richard Klein

In American culture, descended from Puritans, all universal sources of pleasure are eventually medicalized, then politicized and finally policed—if not prohibited altogether: witness alcohol, tobacco, cannabis, fat, pornography, masturbation. Take perfume, more and more considered to be a drug and, like all drugs, both venerated as medicine and despised as poison.

Perfume sales are booming: $4.8 billion last year. Americans are celebrating its traditional virtues, as a source of healing, a jewel of self-adornment, an instrument of seduction and a mild inebriant. There is also the return of aromatherapy, a New Age, age-old nostrum prescribed since antiquity, but which disappeared in the eighteenth century with the birth of modern medicine. Aromatherapy uses the fragrant essence of flowers and the scented oils of herbs to assuage tensions, refresh the spirit and cure a variety of ills. In the hands of therapists, perfume is assimilated to balm.

Yet *The New York Times* reports that the University of Minnesota has begun to adopt a "scent-free policy" that bans perfume from certain areas on behalf of those who suffer from multiple chemical sensitivities. The newspaper noted that this move may mark the beginning of a national chemical correctness revolution. An organization called the Human Ecology Action League has declared: "Perfume is going to be the tobacco smoke of tomorrow." To those who want to make America scent-free, perfume vapor, like nicotine smoke, is a mephitic poison in the nose, like the smell of a reeky skunk (Latin, *mephitis*). To those sickened by its mephitis, perfume is a foul exhalation impurely emitted from bodies drenched in its stench. Mephistopheles, who stinks like Hell, takes his name from the skunk.

Perfume is threatening because it is so insinuating. The anti-scent movement had a notable success a couple of years ago when it forced *The New Yorker* to stop running scent strips in perfume ads. The magazine caved under the movement's strongest argument, that the strips represented a harmful intrusion into the lives of the chemically sensitive. The magazine issued a statement saying it would alter its policy out of concern for those who "were not comfortable smelling fragrance throughout the issue." The crucial word here seems to be "throughout." The dream of advertisers is a scent strip whose spray would be so precisely aimed that its fragrance would last only as long as it took to sniff and turn the page. But in fact the reader had no way of escaping the smell throughout the issue, for perfume's very nature is to leak; its power of expansion defies editorial control. Though perfume may impose itself casually or with willful audacity, it is always unavoidable. Perfume never gives the smeller a chance.

The question arises: What would be lost if perfume were banned in public places? Compared with the suffering of those with allergies and asthma or the distress of those, such as pregnant women, with acute sensitivity to scent, what right do we have to the freedom to smell—to sniff and be sniffed? What value dare we assign to the pleasure of perfume, to its rare, briefly scented occurrence, when weighed against the suffering of many? Suppose America were scent-free: Would anything be missed?

Imagine that you had a greatly diminished sense of smell. Such people exist. It is estimated that 50 percent of those over 65 have trouble smelling; the figure rises to 75 percent for those over 80; men are worse off than women. Some people are actually "odor blind": they can only smell certain notes in a fragrance. But some people have no sense of smell at all. What do they miss?

A young man I know has no sense of smell, but he has excellent taste. He cooks marvelously and differentiates subtly, not only among foods but among wines, too. His tongue is so highly developed that he can walk into a kitchen and taste lemon on the air. He smells with his tongue, but he has never smelled a rose. Many things that smell good taste terrible, such as perfume or roses. He is not seduced by tabooed odors: he doesn't know the smell of his lover's body. Nor is he revolted by offensive smells: he was hired to clean the Augean stables of a horse farm one hot summer, when no one else would take the job.

As a child he was told by teachers that he could not taste because he could not smell. When he insisted to the contrary, he was told he was making it up. It was as

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if they could not accept the possibility that lacking one sense might actually be advantageous. If we lost smell, we might miss the pleasures of fragrance, but we would escape the inconvenience of stench. Electronic noses are already at work monitoring pig farms, chemical factories and sewers. Smells, both good and bad, can be analyzed by computers that recognize their molecules. The digitized odor can then be forwarded to centers of control and regulation where it can be interpreted without ever being smelled. Indeed, there must be geneticists wondering if they couldn't eliminate the gene for smell, thereby allowing humans to live with greater comfort on an intensely polluted, increasingly fetid planet.

Compared with the disadvantages, what use to us is the capacity to smell?

Not much! says Kant, the idealist philosopher, who erected a whole hierarchy of the senses and placed smell last. Smell's rank falls below even that of taste and well beneath the more noble senses of sight, hearing and touch. For Kant, smell and taste are inferior philosophically, because they are more subjective than the other three senses, which are more objective or objectifying. Unlike the purely subjective senses of smell and taste, those of sight, touch and hearing lend "an empirical thrust" to the perceptions of external objects. In the act of seeing, one remains oneself; in the act of smelling, one dissolves. It's as if the eye when it looks at something says to the brain, "Don't pay attention to me, stupid; look at the thing out there." Whereas the nose says to the brain, "Enjoy the pleasure I'm lending you; smell me smelling; don't worry about knowing anything about the source of so much pleasure; just enjoy the deliciously invasive sensation I give you in the nose!" Seeing, hearing, touching are therefore more reliable and necessary as sources of truth about the world. By contrast, smelling doesn't give you much knowledge, and what it knows is hardly worth knowing.

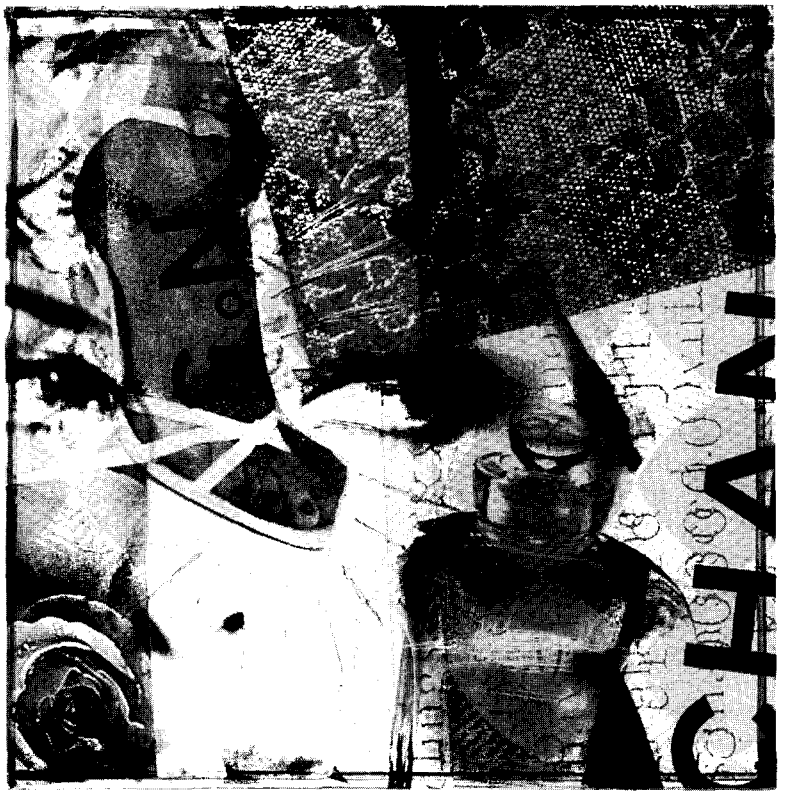

ILLUSTRATION BY TOM PRESTON FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

It's amazing how little able we are to describe the smells we like. Ask any woman why she wears the perfume she does and she's hard-pressed to say. It's the way the perfume makes her feel. People are always using metaphors from the other senses to talk about smell. The Olfactory Research Fund introduced the first National Sense of Smell Day with the phrase, "Get in touch with your sense of smell."

Reflect on the paucity of terms we have to speak about smell. We say that we smell a smell or taste a taste. We use the same word for the verb and the noun, the subjective act and the objective fact. With the nobler senses, we distinguish the one more clearly from the other. I suppose you could object that we sometimes say that someone is a soft "touch," but when is someone ever a good "hear" or a good "look" (maybe a "good looker")? The poverty of our language is reflected in the fact that it is possible to see, behold, observe, view, discern, perceive, descry, sight, espy, notice, glimpse, survey, watch, scrutinize, inspect, examine (even look, glance or leer, gaze or squint, peer, pry, take a peep or a peek at), but one can only smell, sniff, scent, snuff, nose, inhale, breathe or breathe in. And how often do we snuff or nose?

Because the sense of smell is the most subjective it is therefore "the least rewarding," says Kant, "and the most easily dispensable." Humanity, he thinks, could do without the sense of smell, since trying to cultivate it or refine it is not worth the trouble, "for there are more objects of disgust (especially in densely populated places) than of pleasure; and the pleasure provided by this sense can always only be fleeting and transitory if it is to be enjoyed." What is fleeting and transitory never interests Kant, who, like a good bourgeois, values products that last. Perfume doesn't interest him; but pollution does.

The streets of Kant's Germany, like those of every other country in Europe at the time, were places of unimaginable stench. Patrick Süsskind, in his novel *Perfume*, a book essential for thinking about this topic, recalls the pestilential odor that hung over Paris in those days: the rotting corpses in the potters' fields, the smell of slaughtered herds and tanning hides and the enormous piles of excrement deposited on the streets by horses and other domestic animals. Versailles, a century earlier, was equally revolting: the park, the garden and even the castle reeked of urine; fecal matter covered the stairways. Under the window of the ministers, a butcher grilled pork blood sausages daily. By comparison, the

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worst streets of our worst cities are far less odorous. Today, we are offended by smells that hardly would have been noticed in the ragout of putrefaction and pestilential exhalations with which people lived in Europe, and still live today in places around the world. No wonder Kant dreamed of losing his sense of smell.

Smell has a long history of condemnation. During the eighteenth century, the naturalist Buffon, following Aristotle, called smell the most animalistic of the senses and like Kant he disparaged it. It was not until Freud that this old story was set on its head. Freud's suspicion was aroused by the forces allied against smell. In a characteristic move, he reversed the hierarchy of the senses and in one of his most daring speculations argued that smell's higher truth was being concealed with the force of a taboo.

Freud was persuaded that the human distaste for strong smell was a consequence of our ancestor, the great ape, having stood up. Removing the nose from its proximity to the ground eliminated its former utility as an instrument for knowing the world—for following scented trails. Animals live and love and, as every deer hunter knows, die by their noses. But, standing erect, humans have compensated for the loss of the powerful faculty of smell by acquiring more acute powers of visual discrimination. Those powers in turn have made it possible for humankind to gain knowledge of the world through abstract conceptions, based on a model of vision: ideas are said to be forms of reflection that enlighten us. Thus, vision was promoted to the top of the hierarchy of human senses, and smell, once triumphant, went all the way to the bottom—not only low but dirty.

The decline of smell in favor of vision had consequences for our sexual lives. Formerly, the male, his nose close to the ground, was principally attracted by the smell of the menstruating female, and sexual relations were confined to the times she was in "heat." But, having become upright, humans could enjoy the permanent pleasures of visual excitement and the relation of menstruation to sexual excitation was reversed; we make love all month long, except when she's having her period. Smell not only falls into disuse, it becomes identified with that animal stage that man in his evolutionary development has surmounted—a hateful reminder of the age when we animals loved, exclusively, all the bad smells from below.

In humans, the "natural" tendency to hate the smell of whatever is associated with reproduction, excretion or death is not natural or instinctive. It is a consequence of the repression imposed on our noses by civilization, by what Freud calls "organic repression." Our bodies respond with a seemingly instinctive repulsion to smells that we have learned to loathe; hatred of strong smells has in humans become second nature. Small children have no instinctive horror of feces; they develop it as a condition of entering society. At the same time, one scarcely finds the smell of one's own repulsive—only that of other people's.

The seeming contradiction between the displeasure people feel toward strong smells and the intensity of pleasure those smells can sometimes excite is at the heart of Freud's explanation. One generally hates all body odor, unless it happens to be the smell of a lover, and then, when the animal repressed returns, it can drive you crazy. The perfume industry is trying to find some way to exploit the fact that one of the principal components of underarm sweat is androstenone, a pheromone in pigs so powerful that whenever a sow gets a whiff of this natural attractor, her eyes glaze over and she takes up the mating stance. Truffles, it is said, copy androstenone, driving sows to root around at oak trees looking for love in the guise of a truffle. What works on them might work on us, except that organic repression has, for the most part, turned off in us the natural seduction of underarm. The search for human pheromones, perfume's magic bullet, is probably a dead end. What might naturally have lured our simian ancestors to one another was generally surmounted and reversed in value, when we apes became acculturated.

That truth, however, should not keep us from acknowledging that there are times when armpits can be dynamite. It depends on your tastes and theirs. Historian Alain Corbin recounts in *The Foul and the Fragrant: Odor and the Social Imagination* that Henry III, King of France, was reputed to have been smitten his whole life with Marie de Clèves after he entered a room where she had just been changing and smelled the odor that still clung to her chemise.

It has long been understood that perfumes smell differently on different bodies. Nobody knows why. The French, as with most things, assume it has to do with the liver. I find it plausible that the great chemical factory in our liver determines how our body converts the molecules of fragrances and scents. Our liver decides subjectively what smells we like, objectively how our body smells and, therefore, how perfumes smell on us. I think it's our liver that determines our taste in smell, and maybe in most things. If Calvin Klein decides that this year he'll color everything moss, it could be some hepatic imbalance that just spilled over in his left lobe. Or if he invents a new perfume like "One," that smells of prairies of green young indistinguishable things all new and fresh, it may be that he is trying to find the olfactory equivalent of the corresponding imbalance of verdant bile.

Sensitivity to strong odor varies widely from culture to culture. Only the French could eat a whole truffle. The odor of it in our noses would be overwhelming. But a few slivers in your scrambled eggs and you can sniff the wind in the old trees. The French, at least since Baudelaire, are persuaded there are no absolutely bad or good smells. The poet wrote that the strongest, most disagreeable smell, if sufficiently diluted, can become divine, whereas the most heavenly perfume smells to hell when it's too concentrated.

Compared with the French, we have little tolerance for excremental scent. A great burgundy, it is com-

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monly said in France, has a distinct, albeit distant odor of pig *merde.* The French love the smell of everything that belongs to organs and intestines. French noses thrill at the pissy perfume of cooking kidneys; they love to hang their wild ducks for a week or more before roasting, curing them until they've reached the pungent edge of putrefaction. Sex among the French is preoccupied, often obsessed, with anality; here we focus on breasts, a national fixation analyzed decades ago by Philip Wylie. The predominance of oral as distinct from anal fixations in American culture seems to require excessively repressive taboos on all dark and disturbing smells. America's romance is still with milk—with consuming the white fat of that infinitely pure, all-forgiving, scarcely odorous maternal gift.

ILLUSTRATION BY TOM PRESTON FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Of course, America has its own special tribal relations to strong smell. In *The Raw and the Cooked,* the anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss tells the story of a platoon of Americans passing by the mouth of a cave in Normandy during World War II. The stench issuing from it was so appalling that they used a flamethrower to incinerate what they were sure must be rotting corpses. The truth they discovered was that these caves belonged to the Roquefort cooperative and were brimming with the aging moldy cheese. Levi-Strauss noted the cultural difference: what a French nose knows to be the sharp effluvia of delicious ripening is evidence to a G.I. nose of carrion flesh.

Or perhaps it is the American taboo on death that makes us hate the smell of any strong odors. Any time we smell a dark smell or even an intense one, it reminds us either of our animality or our mortality. In a way, these are the same thing. The poet Archie Ammons once said that America is always trying to hide the stench of death—anything that speaks of putrefaction, of our body's partial transformation from solid liquid into gas. The taboo on strong smells must reflect some deeper irrational fear. As if sniffing could kill us, the way the mysterious odor that arose from the body of a dying woman in Riverside, California, sickened the doctors and nurses who treated her. Even perfumes devised to mask the smell of our rot participate in it; they can't help evoking the very vile odor their beautiful fragrance conceals.

Throughout North America, intense shame surrounds smelling bad. Psychologists note that people with real or imagined congenital odors are among their most deeply troubled patients. The head of a Canadian clinic specializing in treating chronic bad breath remarked that the condition is devastating. "Clients complain of rocky marriages, continual rejection at job interviews or lost promotion opportunities," he told the *Montreal Gazette.* Many people, particularly women, dread speaking about intimate odors, and those most ashamed are least likely to seek help for what is often a medical problem: bacterial and fungal infections.

To smell bad is to be permanently disqualified from being fully human, too close to being an animal. In America, the sweet smell of success has no smell; as a nation we dream of being odor-free. Perhaps we Americans do not smell because we aspire to be like money, which rarely smells. "*Pecunia non olet,*" replied the Emperor Vespasian when it was suggested to him that it might be unseemly to put a tax on public toilets. A piece of gold, after all, can emerge even from a cloaca. Our antiperspirants and deodorants let us play or work as hard or as hot as we want, and, like gold, remain dry and cool.

It has not always been a shame to have persistent B.O. When people bathed less, the ammoniac smell of semen surrounded certain men with an unmistakable scent, which signaled the vigor of their phallic existence. The so-called *aura seminalis* was said to attract women.

Louis XIV, the Sun King, loved only women who smelled powerfully bad. The worse they stank the better he liked them. He particularly favored redheads, who were reputed to have an excess of blood and thus smelled the strongest. He himself reeked horribly, as the reports of many ambassadors attest. The king abhorred the bath and considered it unhealthy. He saw himself, like many aristocrats with ancestral ties to the land, as a demi-peasant who wanted sex to smell the way it does with animals. But we Americans want the oppo-

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site. Scentlessness is civility, though exceptions are still made for a certain class of Englishmen or Anglophiles who believe not much in bathing.

Louis was not alone in being aroused by bad smells. Plebeians as well as aristocrats can find them moving. There are many who love the smell of excrement, who are seduced by it and praise it. After all, it is the most democratic smell, the one that tells the truth of our universal condition. Our elementary humanity is so insistently present in that smell that Voltaire adduced it as an argument against the Incarnation, arguing that no God would ever allow Himself to defecate. A Christian might reply that it is precisely in that respect, as well, that He, with divine humility, became one of us. Born in a manger, He doubtless understood the smells of the barnyard.

The sublimity of what smells bad may best be grasped if one credits the widely circulated rumor that some of the greatest perfumes derive their most troubling strains from excretions. These are not only glandular secretions such as musk from the penis of male deer, ambergris disgorged by whales or sensuous smelling civet, deposited in anal pouches by the eponymous Ethiopian cat, whose scent was beloved by Cleopatra. Perfumes may, in addition, bear the notes of urine, semen, blood and even feces. Some activists want the FDA, which regulates perfumes, to require its manufacturers to list the ingredients. Needless to say, the perfumers are resisting mightily, reluctant to invite the suspicion they are selling Eau de Merde or Air d'Urine. And yet the highest form of their art may well consist in their ability to exploit excremental notes that are the most troubling to the American nose, in ways that both disguise the source of the trouble and mine it for its power to incite a shiver of long repressed carnality. Oddly, the cadre demanding labeling for perfume has remained small; there has been no public uproar. Maybe our noses know implicitly some of the ingredients, which we would just as soon not consciously know anything about.

Are Americans becoming more hysterical or just more sensitized to odor? I have a friend who recently moved to California. Since arriving in Los Angeles, she swears she has become infinitely more sensitive to scents, more allergic, as it were, to perfumes and chemical fragrances. She acknowledges that she might simply have bought into a regional neurosis that repudiates everything unnatural, except jogging. But she insists that her body, assaulted by pollution in L.A., has grown increasingly intolerant of all chemicals.

There are many, particularly in the environmental movement, who wish to ban not all perfumes but only those that are chemically synthesized. Yet scientists today are able to reproduce so exactly the molecules of natural essences that the chemical odor is atomically indistinguishable from the natural one; they are the same molecules. Not only is nature perfectly imitated by the artificial synthesis, but one can no longer even properly speak of imitation: the resulting chemical *is* the natural substance, chemically speaking. Still, there are many odors that have been created in the laboratory that have no equivalent at all in nature.

Chanel No. 5 was the first perfume to mix natural essences with artificial ones. In that respect it was the first modern perfume; indeed, it may have been the first cubist one. Coco Chanel transformed our idea of what to smell at the same time her good friends in Paris—Braque, Picasso and Léger—were revolutionizing the representation of what we see. Her cubism was not only expressed in the boxy shape of her bottle, a departure from the graceful flasks blown for women's tables; it was reflected in the name and number, a dramatic change from the traditional poetic names reserved for perfumes. Just as cubism discovered the machine in the world around us, Chanel made us smell synthetic chemicals—the characteristic odor of the twentieth century.

More and more, our olfactory environment has become artificial. *The Boston Globe* recently reported that people born in different decades experience nostalgic feelings in response to different odors. Food and cooking evoke these sentiments in people of all ages. But while people born in the 1920s, '30s, and '40s remember most fondly the smell of flowers, sea air, cut grass and burning leaves, those born in the '50s, '60s and '70s best remember Play-Doh, window cleaner, hair spray, suntan lotion and felt-tip pens.

Some argue that the seeming increase in allergic reaction to smell may be a species reaction to the increasing pollution. We become intermittently aware of the ambient pervasiveness of man-made smells only when we encounter a whiff of Play-Doh, which transports us directly to childhood, like a Proustian *madeleine*. Thrust back in time, we realize the extent of our insertion in a universe of synthetic smell. People react to that pervasiveness in two ways. They eroticize what is intrusive; Jean-Paul Gaultier said he wanted the note of nail polish remover in his perfume to snag the earliest memories of being made up to be feminine. Or they become allergic.

Conversely, it may be that the scent-free movement represents a moment in an often repeated historical cycle. Changes in taste in perfume since the seventeenth century have always been linked to political changes. After Louis XIV, the aristocracy adopted the more enlightened English models of hygiene and favored the most delicate floral scents. With the French Revolution, the aroma of lily—the king's fleur-de-lis—worn as perfume was enough to send its enthusiasts to the guillotine. Napoleon and Josephine, who came from Martinique and loved tropical scents, wrote intimate letters to one another expressing their pleasure in each other's bodily smells. The fashion for strong animal-based perfumes was reinforced by the taste for antiquity that characterized the Napoleonic Empire. Being rubbed and oiled with musk made the new aristocrats in the Tuilleries think they were Roman citizens at the baths. With the Restoration, strong perfume fell out of fashion. Tobacco and camphor, extolled by doc-

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tors for their therapeutic value, became the scents of choice.

Perfume returned in the middle of the nineteenth century, but less powerfully, more harmoniously. Queen Victoria was the object of ridicule among the dandies of the Second Empire, who claimed to have detected an undercurrent of musk in the perfume she wore on an official visit to Paris in 1855. At the court of Napoleon's nephew, animal smells were taboo. Americans at the turn of the century were notorious for their strong perfumes; a Parisian could tell instantly when an American woman walked into a room. Two years ago, Aromatique, a home fragrance company, and the maker of Smells of Christmas, Spring, Summer and Autumn, added Smells of Arkansas to its line. "It evokes lovely memories of wonderful afternoons in the woods," the company's owner told *The Dallas Morning News*. No word how it's doing, or whether the residents of Washington are watering their roots with it.

The present movement to make America scent-free may be only the most radical expression of a turn in the cycle of scent, away from the strong perfumes toward barely detectable "fresh" fragrances. Nobody knows exactly what fresh is, but everybody wants it. Some perfumes try to capture it by imitating the peppery odor of ozone when it swirls up from the lip of a waterfall and sharpens the smell of the air. Others evolve into minty notes with an undertone of camphor to startle the nose. Some exploit the scent of pine, which masks other odors with its penetrating woody note. If scent is not shortly prohibited, you can bet it's swinging, under the new more pious regime, in the direction of being the barest whiff of the purest air. The designer Issey Miyake wanted a note for his Eau d'Issey that was "kind of translucent, New Age, sparkling water—the ... way the bottle looks aesthetically." Perfume is on the way to becoming so fresh that it has mainly the odor of the look of the clear bottle that contains it. The designer dreams of perfume that doesn't smell but looks good.

For Baudelaire and Proust, scents and fragrances were the most powerful spurs to the recovery of memory. The capacity of smells to arouse the deepest strata of our memory has of course been well known to artists, but anatomists have also long observed that the sensory nerves in the nose are connected by many pathways to the temporal lobe of the brain where memory is stored. They are also closely tied to the lower limbic region of the brain, where the most primitive impulses of appetite, fear and sex are registered. Phylo- and onto-genetically, perfume puts us in touch with the deepest state of our being. It explains the capacity of odors to touch both the most distant regions of our thought and at the same time to provide powerful primitive physical responses.

Not surprisingly, marketers are finding ways to exploit the allusive identity of odor and thought. Increasingly, scent is being used to manage shoppers. Odor-emitting machines have been found to increase sales: in shoe stores, where they enhance the smell of leather; in bakeries, where they enhance the smell of fresh bread; etc. Automobile dealers can add new car smells to their cars; theaters can intensify the smell of popcorn. A company called Inscentivation has invented a floral spray for slot machines that increases their use by 45 percent. One study in Chicago demonstrated that the greatest percentage of penile erections occurred when male subjects smelled the smell of hot cinnamon buns.

It has often been observed that humans smell like cheese. Patrick Süsskind writes that babies' feet smell "like fresh butter. And their bodies smell like ... a griddle cake that's been soaked in milk." Americans, raised on milk, are probably the cheesiest smelling people on earth. Perhaps that's why we eat so little of it, except when it's included in something else. The French, who eat a lot of cheese, rarely drink milk. They mostly smell like wine.

If the Americans and French smell different, then do other nations have a characteristic smell? Many have claimed they do. Their supposed scent is rarely ever perceived as a particularly good one. Racism has always been predicated on the belief that one could detect the characteristic smell of another race. At the turn of the century, a French Dr. Cabanès described the bland odor of the English, a mixture of leather and seaweed, that often remained in a room for several years. Around the same time, a distinguished Japanese scholar, Dr. Buntaro Adachi, denounced the stench of Occidentals. (He may have had a point. Japanese are without the gland that produces apocrine, the principle source of underarm odor.) A Dr. Bérillon, in 1915, during the First World War, wrote a much-heralded treatise on the fetid odor of Germans. Racist scientific claims about Africans can already be found in 1896, when a certain Jean Lorrain wrote that the "odor of the Negro is like rancid butter and pepper." Bérillon went so far as to argue that smell formed the basis of racial hatred in America. Nothing, he believed, can overcome its olfactory antagonisms.

I disagree. In fact, I have my own proposal for a kind of political aromatherapy. Start from the premise, which is my conclusion, that what smells bad can, in another context, smell good and vice versa. To wit: body odor, if it's new, is a pheromone; it was probably designed by our genes to attract, not repulse. Being new, it has not yet acquired the deep rancid note that emerges after a day or so without bathing. My proposal, then, is this: if you ever encounter "bad" body odor that your nose tells you doesn't come from habits of uncleanliness, but is freshly born of physical exertion or nervous energy, try standing it. Seize the opportunity to struggle with your repressions. Smell again. With little rabbit sniffs, take a whiff of the other's smell. Then, in retro—smell. Try to remember or re-nose it, while you do the work of finding other good odors it resembles. In the end, if you can allow yourself to stand somebody's smell, you might find your antipathy turning into something like pleasure, maybe love. •

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BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Questions of Style

In 1983 a documentary called *Improper Conduct*, co-directed by the late Nestor Almendros, exposed the harassment of gays in Castro's Cuba. A new film, **Strawberry and Chocolate** (Miramax), is a fictional work about gay life in Cuba that deals with less patent forms of harassment. Tomás Gutiérrez Alea, who co-directed it with Juan Carlos Tabio, is safely ensconced in cinema history with *Memories of Underdevelopment*. In that 1968 film Gutiérrez Alea explored spiritual malaise in the midst of revolutionary fervor with extraordinary candor and artistry. He has been active in the intervening years, but it's his latest film, *Strawberry and Chocolate*, that quite understandably has drawn most attention.

The screenplay is by Senel Paz, adapted from one of his own stories, and, with the prerogatives of art, it treats its theme with subtleties that were not available to Almendros in a documentary. Almendros was protesting injustice. Paz, like many people who live under oppressive governments, gay or otherwise, is interested in how people breathe, grow, protect themselves in such a world.

The story opens with a young man and woman, in Havana, going to a hotel to make love. This sequence leads to another with a sardonic twist that a wit like Molnár would have enjoyed. Let's just say that love is not made. The young man, called David, alone and disconsolate, has an ice cream in a café—chocolate. Another young man, called Diego, who more or less flaunts his gayness, sits down at the same table with a strawberry ice cream. Diego makes conversation. David resists entanglement; but Diego is clever, and eventually David is inveigled into going to Diego's apartment with him.

We, wised up as we are by filmgoing, are sure that David, disappointed in women, will succumb to Diego's advances. Not so. Instead, beginning that day and continuing thereafter, we get what David, a fervent Marxist, would call a dialectical relationship between himself and Diego, an apolitical aesthete. David is a university student, socially committed; Diego is a photographer who wants only to live an artistically and emotionally fulfilling life. The continuing tension that arises out of their sexual difference only heightens the dialectics.

Other people are involved, chiefly a Castro helot who is David's friend and neighbor. Police agents and spies do not appear, yet we get a clear sense throughout of privacies being played out in an intensely politicized community.

The directors have comprehended the qualities in Paz's script, which they helped to prepare, and have drawn them out delicately—no heavy underlining. Just when we may be feeling that we are traveling down the well-worn road of the homosexual who aims at the unacknowledged latency in a straight, some jolt of character or thought or atmosphere reminds us that this story is not just a reupholstered cliché.

The two principal roles have been exceptionally well cast. Vladimir Cruz, as David, is straightforward with an acute combination of seriousness and naïveté. But the part calls for several kinds of honesty, which Cruz provides. The complex acting comes from Jorge Perrugoria as Diego. An exceptionally handsome man and gifted actor, Perrugoria plays Diego as a man who will not conceal his gayness (neither does a friend of his); he loves its style, and that style is his form of courage. We all have read about homosexual men in wartime who were especially courageous because they wanted to show that gays are not ipso facto weak and cowardly. They were at least as admirable as any straight military hero. Diego's courage is more social. His swish—or whatever the word is in Spanish—is to him what the white plume is to Cyrano.

Compassion, please, for those who take Robert Altman seriously. Twenty-five years ago *M*A*S*H* announced the arrival of a cruel, witty director. Through the years, especially since the risibly overpraised *Nashville*, the cruelty has waxed while the wit waned. There were interludes of artiness such as *Three Women* and *Vincent and Theo*. There were filmings of sterile plays such as *Streamers* and the Jimmy Dean thing with the long title. But such numbers as *A Wedding*, *A Perfect Couple* and *Health* sustained the real Altman, the smart but continually disintegrating misanthrope. He bursts into full stinkweed flower in **Ready to Wear** (Miramax), and Altman loyalists have to be pitied.

The previews for this film were really on the money. Most such previews, whether thirty-second T.V. spots or longer items in the theater, are misleading. They tend to make all films look alike, so they give us little idea of the real

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Colonel Chabert. *From Balzac. An unexpected survivor of the Napoleonic wars, forcefully played by Gérard Depardieu, returns to upset those who thought him dead. First-class. (Reviewed 12/26/94)* **The Madness of King George.** *Alan Bennett greatly improves his slack play, and Nicholas Hytner directs it more vividly than the theater allowed him to do. Nigel Hawthorne as George III has even more eccentric power here than on stage. (1/30/95)* **Nobody's Fool.** *Paul Newman. A quiet tale of a small-town construction worker that gets knotted when it tries to put on steam. But there's Newman. (1/9/95)* **Vanya on 42nd Street.** *Beautiful. "Uncle Vanya," with no scenery or costumes, just generally fine acting. Haunting. (11/7/94)*—**SK**

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nature of any one film. Not the previews for *Ready to Wear*. Anyone who has seen the previews has essentially seen the picture, which is only more of the same: flash and scurry, sex teasings, splashes of Parisian high fashion and a roster of big names meant to overwhelm us.

Altman's screenplay, written with Barbara Schulgasser, rests on the old belief that, if you knit together a number of familiar stories, the viewer will believe the result is fresh. It didn't work back in the '40s when studios had to put out annual catch-alls that employed all their stars and contract players, and it doesn't work even in this age that kids itself into thinking it can't be kidded.

For instance, in Paris where this picture is set, a Paris crowded for its annual fashion shows, two strangers, Julia Roberts and Tim Robbins, are forced to share a hotel room. (Wow. What a great meet-cute idea.) Robbins and Roberts play it well enough, but the mechanics of contrivance groan beneath them. When the story-strands are less trite, they are unfulfilled. Stephen Rea is a star fashion photographer being wooed by three fashion-magazine editors. He photographs each of them in embarrassing situations. They steal his negatives, and they all sit down to negotiate. Negotiate what? We never learn.

The only element with a trace of wit is one in which Sophia Loren and Marcello Mastroianni replay a famous sequence from *Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow* (1963) with a new twist, but even here, the account of how the two characters meet is creaky.

Various episodes are linked by having people step in dog poo. The long line of different fashion designers' style parades is capped by having one of the designers send her models out naked.

In 1957 Stanley Donen directed a charmer about Paris fashion shows called *Funny Face*. Altman tries to evade charges of lifting stuff from the Donen picture by mentioning it on the soundtrack, but this doesn't clear him. The freeze-frames, the competitive knife work backstage, the "revelation" that fashion is show biz—all are familiar reminders of Donen, but without the glow. Donen didn't hate his people; and Altman at best despises his.

Once, in Budapest, I was conversing with a Hungarian director (who spoke English). He was a hard-line Communist and apparently thought of me as a maggot from the capitalist garbage dump. He was terse and dour until, for some reason, possibly in defiance, I mentioned that I thought *Funny Face* was an excellent film. The grim Marxist scowl broke into a wide smile. "Excellent!" he agreed. No one will ever remember *Ready to Wear* that way. Probably not in any way whatsoever. •

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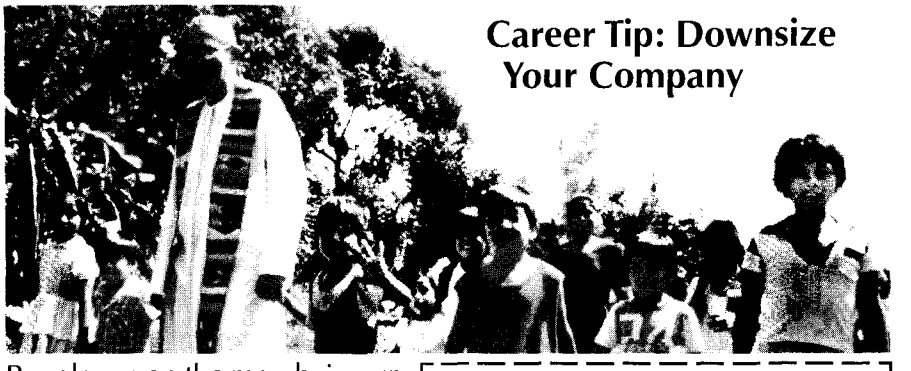

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Chaikovsky, Russia, sexuality and the study of music.

Pathetic Symphonist

BY RICHARD TARUSKIN

I.

Of Tchaikowsky's symphony apart from its performance I need only say that it is highly characteristic of him. In the first movement, the only one with a distinctly poetic basis, he is, as ever, "le Byron de nos jours"; and in the later ones, where he is confessedly the orchestral voluptuary, he is Byronic in that too. The most notable merit of the symphony is its freedom from the frightful effeminacy of most modern works of the romantic school.

While some of its thematic material is engaging and well presented and the orchestration is interesting throughout, there is no trace of development in the symphonic sense, but merely a succession of repetitions and a sequence of climactic runs that often become hysterical.

These comically contrasting opinions pertain to the same symphony, Chaikovsky's Fourth. The first is from a review of the English premiere, which took place under the composer's baton at a London Philharmonic concert on June 1, 1893. (Chaikovsky was passing through on his way to Cambridge, where he was to receive an honorary doctorate alongside Boito, Bruch, Saint-Saëns and Grieg, certifying his status in the company of the contemporary great.) The review appeared six days later in *The World*, over the byline of its regular critic, one Corno di Bassetto, who had just started writing plays under his given name, George Bernard Shaw. The other extract is from a venerable textbook, Paul Henry Lang's *Music in Western Civilization* (1941), a work that for at least a quarter-century played a controlling role in defining and defending canonical musical values for the English-speaking peoples. ("Tchaikovsky," it took care to inform its readers, "does not belong in the company of the great of music.")

Chaikovsky's decline in critical standing (though never in popularity) has to be read partly against the background of the shift from the "poetic" to the "structural" (or "developmental") as the paramount criterion for artistic evaluation, reflecting the general academization of taste that reached its midcentury—no, let's face it, its cold war—culmination in New Critical formalism. This obvious difference, however, should not obscure the equally important affinity between Shaw's appraisal and Lang's. Manliness is a cardinal issue for them both. But where one critic ensconces Chaikovsky as a bulwark against creeping sissification, the other grants him an honorary uterus. Both views were typical in their day.

How did that change come about? To begin with, scarcely five months after Shaw's review appeared, Chaikovsky died suddenly under bewildering circumstances. His death was attributed to cholera, a disease that was transmitted mainly by contaminated feces, and by the 1890s was considered a disease of the underclass. That year's epidemic in St. Petersburg, a city built on bogs where contagions flourished (and where Chaikovsky, who lived near Moscow, was visiting his younger brother Modest), had mainly passed. At the funeral the body was displayed, in violation of familiar but in fact obsolete quarantine regulations, and the very punctilious Rimsky-Korsakov was aghast to see the cellist Verzhbilovich, dead drunk, plant a slobbering kiss upon the corpse. He wrote about it in his memoirs. Tongues wagged all over Russia. Tolstoy, who wept (to his daughter's astonishment) at the news of Chaikovsky's death, mused that "there was something not quite clear" about him, "more as a man than as a musician."

Could there be anyone by now who does not know what Tolstoy was hinting at? As Chaikovsky gained fame as a composer, eventually becoming the most famous composer Russia had ever produced, his private life became increasingly the object of lewd speculation. To forestall it (and to please his proud but artless father) Chaikovsky had taken it into his head to marry, despite what Nina Berberova, his most *mondaine* biographer, liked to call his "complex sexuality." The great fiasco that ensued (physical revulsion, "neurasthenia," flight, messy separation) left him a wedded bachelor for the rest of his life (and a social cripple for a while), and made his secret—one that he had in common with Musorgsky, Balakirev and sundry lesser fry, to confine matters only to Russian composers—everybody's property.

That being the case, the wonder at first blush is that his life was virtually free of scandal. Only once within his lifetime, and obliquely, was Chaikovsky's sexual irregularity ever broached in print. This happened in the aftermath of the marriage attempt, as part of a "dirty, base, vile, slander-filled philippic" (as Chaikovsky called it) that appeared in the newspaper *Novoye vremya* (New Times) on August 26, 1878. Its subject was the Moscow Conservatory, where Chaikovsky was then a professor, and which is now named for him. After describing the usual backbiting and the everyday skirt-chasing, the anonymous author hinted at "amours of a different kind, but about them, for a very obvious reason, I shall not speak." In an anguished letter to Modest, Chaikovsky confided that he read this as evidence that "my reputation falls upon the whole conservatory." It made him more desperate than ever to give up his teaching post, which the providential advent of his eccentric benefactress Madame von Meck, a colossally wealthy widow whose *mystères* and complexities dovetailed nicely with his own, allowed him to do that very year.

By the mid-1880s Chaikovsky enjoyed an unprecedented public prestige for a Russian musician, not only as a world celebrity but also as a court familiar under Tsar Alexander III (from whom he received the Vladimir Cross, the equivalent of our Presidential Medal of Freedom). He became his country's uncrowned composer laureate, the beneficiary of numerous official commissions. A complete professional, he had the whole Imperial theatrical and musical establishment in both capitals at his virtual beck and call, and kept his colleagues and his rivals in a state of despairing awe. The power of his presence on the scene was such that it literally paralyzed Rimsky-Korsakov, to whom news of Chaikovsky's death brought deliverance

Tchaikovsky: The Early Years 1840-1874
The Crisis Years 1874-1878
The Years of Wandering 1878-1885
The Final Years 1885-1893
by David Brown
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from a prolonged creative block. Rimsky immediately set about exorcising Chaikovsky's ghost with an opera, *Christmas Eve*, on the same subject from Gogol that had previously served Chaikovsky as the source for a libretto.

Blessed with disciplined work habits, unencumbered by family or occupational distractions, Chaikovsky developed a Mozartean technical facility; and he was one of very few nineteenth-century composers of whom that can be said. In 1890 he pulled off "an unbelievable trick," as he wrote early in February, with suitable bravado, to his publisher Jurgenson: "I want to write an opera for the coming season," only months away. He hied off with his brother's manservant Nazar to Florence, and by March 15 the opera was finished in vocal score, the product of forty-four days of furious brainstorming. By mid-June the orchestration was complete, four months and twenty days after the first sketches were put on paper, and the work was dispatched to the theater and to the publisher. The premiere took place on December 7, a little more than ten months after Chaikovsky had written to Jurgenson of the plan.

The work in question, no potboiler, was *The Queen of Spades*, one of the mere half-dozen or so Russian operas to have breached the language barrier to world repertory status, a feat not merely of supreme craftsmanship, but also of an imaginative quality unmatched in its way in all of Russian opera. Along with *The Sleeping Beauty*, the greatest of all nineteenth-century ballets, *The Queen of Spades* exerted a tremendous and gratefully acknowledged influence on Alexandre Benois and the other prime movers of Russian aestheticism during the 1890s, marking Chaikovsky as the guiding genius of the so-called Silver Age of Russian culture—or as one destined, had he lasted out a normal span of years, for such a stature. That efflorescence was a renaissance of aristocratic culture, and it was in large part animated, as everyone acknowledged, by what we would now call a gay sensibility. That did not brand it, however, as unhealthy or aberrant, or unmanly. The aristocratic and the gay so overlapped and intermixed in those days that they were apt to be regarded as virtually interchangeable categories.

One could hardly say that Chaikovsky's existence was in any way frustrated or unfulfilled. His contemporaries, certainly, never said any such thing. He lived sumptuously—like a *barin*, as the Russians say, in lordly fashion—at crown expense. Madame von Meck's lavish subventions, which continued until 1890, gave him absolute freedom to travel.

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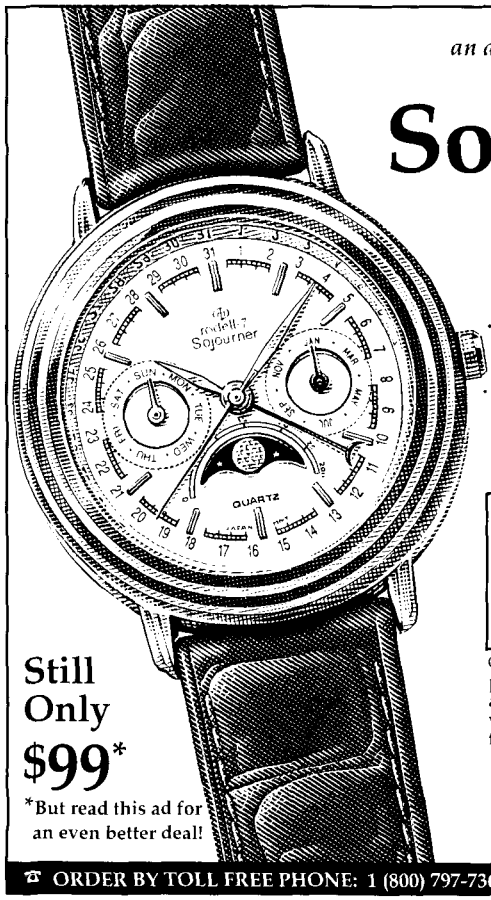

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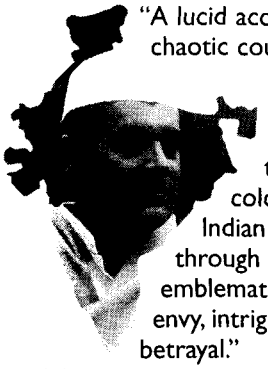

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At the age of 51, already snow-capped, he impressed the 31-year-old Gustav Mahler, directing the German premiere of *Eugene Onegin*, as "an elderly gentleman, very likable, with elegant manners, who seems quite rich." On his visits to St. Petersburg, Chaikovsky was surrounded by a horde of dapper, adoring youths, some of them titled, some his relations, some both—"Modest's gang," as Berberova called them, who "more or less lived off him and enjoyed pleasing him," and who, since Uncle Petya had written three then-popular suites for orchestra, called themselves his "Fourth Suite." The 10-year-old Stravinsky caught sight of him from afar in the foyer of the Mariyinsky Theater, and forever afterward recalled "white hair, large shoulders, a corpulent back." This was a man of substance, of weight, a man who radiated worldly success. Above all, this was a self-made man, and that meant a manly man.

Never before had a Russian musician brought such glory to his sovereign and his nation, or represented them so impressively abroad. His state funeral (and burial in the capital, by order of his friend the Tsar) was a public event that filled the streets of St. Petersburg. The papers reported in amazement that the turnout for Chaikovsky dwarfed those for Dostoyevsky and Turgenev. By 1893, the year of that outpouring of public adoration, not to mention the Cambridge doctorate and Shaw's review, an article like the one in *Novoye vremya* would have brought ridicule not on Chaikovsky but on its author and its publisher.

II.

There is no reason to suppose that Corno di Bassetto did not know what thousands of Russians knew about Chaikovsky, and no reason to suppose that he cared about it, by 1893, any more than they did. Despite the play-acting of the occasional queen (or *tyotka*, in Russian, after the French *tante*)—of which Chaikovsky, thoroughly conventional in his social views, strongly disapproved—homosexuality, in those days, simply did not, as today's critics say, "essentialize" a person. It did not typecast, or stereotype, or render one's nature darkly and irrevocably Other. It was a taste, a preference leading to a mode of behavior that neither predicted other aspects of one's behavior nor marked one's emotional life as alien or abnormal. At worst it was regarded as a debauchery, a vicious practice. Though homosexuality was prohibited by law in many countries, including Russia, it was a virtually unprosecuted crime for anyone possessing rank, respectability or money. For such practitioners it was regarded, and indulged, as a form of libertinage. (It has even been argued that tolerance for homosexual relations was greater in Russia than anywhere else in Europe during the nineteenth century—at least when, as usually happened, the active partner socially outranked the passive one—because Russia was a feudal society until 1861, and "gentlemanly games" were a traditional *droite du seigneur*.)

Thus, in the same letter to his wife in which Count Tolstoy made reference to something-not-quite-clear, he also wrote that "I feel very sorry about Tchaikovsky,... because it seemed to me that we had something in common." When Berberova interviewed Chaikovsky's long-surviving sister-in-law Panya (that is, Praskovya Vladimirovna, née Konshina, a millionaire heiress who married the composer's brother Anatoly in 1882 and died, at the age of 92, in 1956), the old lady was far more concerned with how the biographer would report Chaikovsky's drinking than his sex life. She boasted gaily about her various adulterous affairs, including one with an officer named Verinovsky, who was accompanying her brother-in-law. "I stole a lover from him in Tiflis," she gloated, clapping her hands. "He never forgave me." When Berberova, to make sure, put the question to her straight out ("In that society where she shone as a star, what did people think of the taste for young boys?"), Panya chirped, "No one wondered at anything in our milieu."

Even (or especially) in that milieu, however, people wondered at the abrupt circumstances of Chaikovsky's death, and the social stigma they seemed to imply. Cholera was incompatible with Chaikovsky's exalted public image—"simply insulting," wrote a later editor of *Novoye vremya*—and alternative causes were sought. It was an ideal incubator for rumors. Suicide theories were much stimulated by the Sixth Symphony, which was first performed under the composer's baton only nine days before his demise, with its lugubrious finale (ending *morendo*, "dying away"), its brief but conspicuous allusion to the Orthodox requiem liturgy in the first movement and above all its easily misread subtitle.

Pateticheskaya simfoniya means roughly the same thing Beethoven meant when he called his Sonata in F minor, op. 57, the *Appassionata*—impassioned. The Russian title does not have the connotations of its better-known French translation—*Symphonie Pathétique*, "a symphony of suffering." Nobody paid much attention to the piece at the first performance

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(sans subtitle, it should be noted). The composer complained at the disappointingly *apathique* reception: it was "not disliked," he wrote his publisher, "but has caused some bewilderment." And this may have prompted him to spell things out just a little. (The P-word was Modest's idea, according to Modest.) When the symphony was done again a couple of weeks later, in memoriam and with subtitle in place, everyone listened hard for portents, and that is how the symphony became a transparent suicide note. Depression was the first diagnosis. "Homosexual tragedy" came later.

For the great essentializer in Chaikovsky's day was not sexuality, it was nationality. It was something of which every Russian had to be acutely aware, whether he gloried in it, or whether, like Chaikovsky (or his early mentor Anton Rubinstein, a converted Jew who faced a double stigma) he tried to fight it. "If you only knew the insulting tone of condescension with which they address a Russian musician!" Chaikovsky wrote to Madame von Meck from Vienna in 1877.

> You can read it in their eyes: "You're just a Russian, *but I am so kind and indulgent that I favor you with my attention.*" The hell with them! Last year I found myself against my will at Liszt's. He was nauseatingly deferential, but a smile that never left his lips spoke the sentence I underlined above with perfect clarity.

Over this, too, Chaikovsky triumphed. His European fame eclipsed even that of Rubinstein, who was not only a composer but a world-class virtuoso. As the Cambridge degree demonstrated, but even more conclusively the invitation to come to New York and preside over the inauguration of Carnegie Hall, Chaikovsky was accepted by the end of his fairly short life as a world figure, not a national composer but a "universal" one. The Carnegie Hall program book proclaimed him, with Brahms and Saint-Saëns, one of the three greatest living musicians, and some of the New York papers huckstered him up into unchallenged supremacy.

By the first decade of the twentieth century, however, the essentialist curse had begun to reclaim him. Not at all coincidentally, it happened first in England, where Chaikovsky had been particularly honored before. Very characteristically, too, the essentializing discourses of nationality and sexuality reappeared in tandem—as when Edwin Evans, an early English biographer (writing in 1906), equated Chaikovsky's "racial" endowment as a Slav with "an emotional temperament, fringing hysteria," thus finally nudging him over that heavily patrolled line separating the virile from the effeminate. Why then? Why there?

III.

In May 1895, not two years after Chaikovsky's unsettling death, an English jury convicted Oscar Wilde of "committing acts of gross indecency with other male persons." Britain's most conspicuous aesthete was sentenced to two years at hard labor. The charges had been pressed by Sir John Sholto Douglas, the eighth Marquess of Queensberry best known for his devotion to the manly arts (chiefly boxing, the rules of which still bear his name). The main charge was that of seducing the Marquess's son, Lord Alfred Douglas, a minor poet and editor.

Wilde's tragic misadventure, the most sensational and widely reported incident of its kind, had enormous repercussions. The ill-intentioned publicity that it received was a major watershed in the essentialization—and the pathologization—of homosexuality around the turn of the century. The homosexual was now defined not by his acts but by his character, a character that was certified to be diseased, hence necessarily alien to that of healthy, "normal" people. The condition of homosexuality was regarded, especially in England and her colonies past and present, not merely as a mark of Cain but as a virtual third sex—a hermaphroditic "inversion," a woman's sensibility in a man's body—and this ostracizing viewpoint was sanctioned by medical science.

Chaikovsky, so recently lauded in England for his "freedom from frightful effeminacy," was assimilated to the new essentializing view. The process can be vividly illustrated through the writings of the American critic James Gibbon Huneker. Bowled over by Chaikovsky's music on first acquaintance (the famous piano concerto in Nikolai Rubinstein's torrential rendition at the Paris Exposition of 1878), Huneker had written that Chaikovsky was one of the elect who "said great things in a great manner." Yet the critic explicitly withdrew his former encomium in a collection of essays called *Mezzotints in Modern Music*, published in 1899. He now alluded darkly to Chaikovsky's "psychopathic temperament," adding in affected commiseration that the composer's "entire existence was clouded by some secret sorrow, the origin of which we can dimly surmise, but need not investigate." Sympathy gives way to revulsion by the time Huneker sums up his new assessment of the formerly great musician: "There is no need of further delving into the pathology of this case, but it is well to keep the

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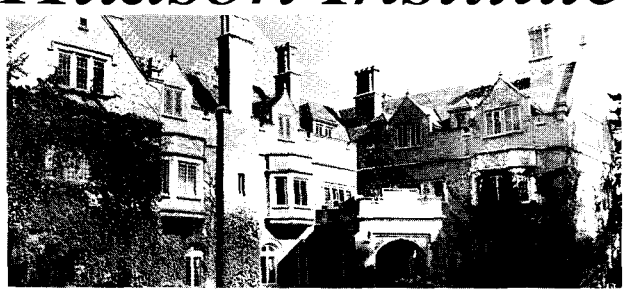

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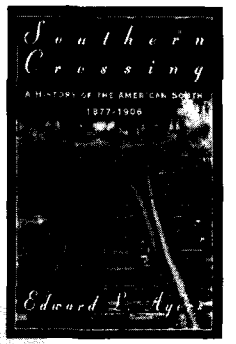

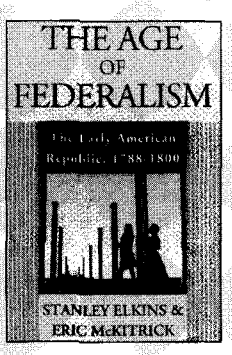

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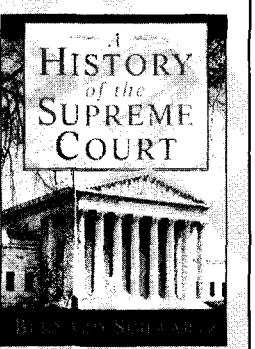

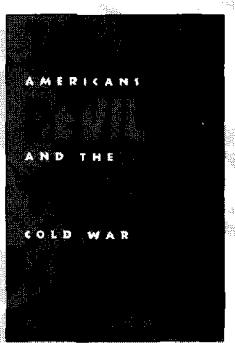

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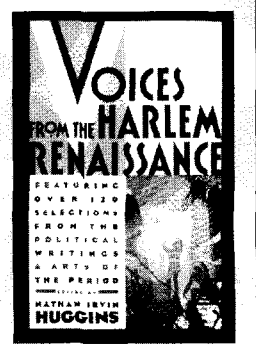

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fact in view, because of its important bearing on his music, some of which is truly pathological." The art, as well as the man, had been sexually essentialized and sexually pathologized, and so they have remained in much American and most English criticism.

Ah, the sordid things that British critics began hearing in Chaikovsky's music! And oh, the goosey recklessness with which they now declared their aversion to it! Both are epitomized in a survey-symposium called *The Music of Tchaikovsky*, edited by Gerald Abraham, published in England in 1945 and still in print. "Tchaikovsky's mind, seen for a moment from a scientific viewpoint, constitutes a textbook illustration of the borderland between genius and insanity," wrote Edward Lockspeiser, who speaks of the composer's "schoolgirlish sentimentality" and goes on to warn that "the man and his music are one—unsatisfied and inflamed." Finally broaching the matter of "forked sexuality," the critic homes in on the *Symphonie Pathétique*:

> And yet pathos, despite the fervour of his suffering, is not a quality that Tchaikovsky could express with any sense of nobility.... The dignity of suffering was unknown to him, but not its pleasures. He is the musician of indulgence.... It may be unorthodox in modern musical criticism to point, in a symphony, to a sense of guilt or of sin; but they are there, in his letters as in his music, expressed with the same horrifying terror as in the poetry of Baudelaire.... His is not the "art of concealing art"; it is music to gorge on, shameless in its sensuousness and splendour. And it was no accident that such music was conceived by a warped neurotic, shy and tortured.

Another contributor to the symposium, Martin Cooper, whose assignment was to survey the symphonies, speaks of the composer's device of building form by continually reapproaching and surpassing climaxes. "Such passages," he writes, "do more than tear the heart (as indeed they are meant to do) but also affect the nerves like an exhibition of hysteria (with which they are very possibly related)." And finally this, a locus classicus: "This man is ill, we feel: must we be shown all his sores without exception? Will he insist on our not merely witnessing, but sharing, one of his nervous attacks?"

Back in Russia, the Wilde affair had a different sort of Chaikovskian repercussion. (As Simon Karlinsky has pointed out, the Russian press took a different attitude: even conservative journalists in Russia saw Wilde as the victim of hypocrisy.) Chaikovsky's music has never been stigmatized in Russia by the composer's sexuality. In fact, the young Soviet Union

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was the one place where Chaikovsky's sexuality was treated, for a while, in a frank and adult fashion—before, that is, the country lapsed into its high-Stalinist *meshchanstvo*, to use the Russian word for petit-bourgeois narrowmindedness.

"Tchaikovsky was homosexual," the editors of the first edition of the composer's correspondence with Madame von Meck stated in 1934, in their commentary to the letters concerning his marriage, and "here are the documents." What followed was the first publication anywhere of excerpts from letters written in 1876 to Modest, his future biographer (who had suppressed them), in which the composer referred candidly and in detail to the "inclination" and the "habits" that the two brothers shared. The Soviet editors prefaced these citations with a statement of exemplary good sense: "Tchaikovsky belongs to history; his life is the object of serious study, and we are obliged to disclose all the facts to scholarship, without undue concern as to the prurient curiosity of the casual reader."

But that openness did not last long. By 1940, the year of Chaikovsky's centennial and his official investiture by the Bolsheviks as the best and most talented of Russian composers, printing the facts about his sexuality had become a punishable offense in his homeland. A new edition of his family correspondence, including the same letters to Modest, was confiscated in that year (it is now a great bibliographical rarity), and the editors—the same editors—were fired from their professional posts.

If Chaikovsky was essentialized during the early Soviet period, it was not along sexual lines, but, in good Marxian fashion, along lines of class. He was viewed in the earliest Red years as the hymnifier of the Tsarist order—a fair enough assessment of his aims, actually—and during the heyday of the *proletkult* his music was looked upon somewhat askance, though it was never banned. (Draconian arts policies did not emerge until the 1930s.) When it became apparent that workers and peasants were not going to give him up just because the theory of the class struggle predicted that they would, a new tack was tried. He became not the proponent of the old order but the prophetic singer of its doom.

This view centered, once again, on the ever-dependable *Pathétique*. The very doctrinaire Marxist musicologist Boleslaw Przybyszewski (the son of Stanislaw Przybyszewski, the Polish symbolist writer), who had served for a time as the director of the Moscow Conservatory, signaled the change in 1933 in an exceptionally interesting article, "Tchaikovsky: the Composer and His Age," which was reprinted the next year as the introduction to the Chaikovsky-von Meck correspondence. Identifying Chaikovsky and Tolstoy, the two greatest artists of late-aristocratic Russia, as a logical pair—"representatives of a dying class, who fight for their way of life but at the same time recognize that it is a doomed existence"—Przybyszewski notes a fundamental difference between them:

> Whereas Tolstoy seeks a way out of the impasse by renouncing his class and hopes to find salvation in his reactionary utopia of feudal socialism, Tchaikovsky, albeit not without an internal struggle, not without resistance, and not without attempts (as in the finale of the Fourth Symphony) to lose himself in the merriment of a peasant festival, still and all has the manliness [!] to pronounce and accept the verdict—horrible for himself and for his class, but dictated by the laws of historical development—of *death*. He had the manliness to look historical truth in the eye and sing himself and his class a shattering requiem—the *Pathetic Symphony*. In this lie his strength and his originality in comparison with other ideologues of the dying aristocracy, clinging to their old estate and hoping to save it by means of a cheap seigneurial show of liberalism.

For this reason Chaikovsky's art is not merely elegiac, but tragic—and inspiring. What is so very striking is that this paean to Chaikovsky's manly courage (*muzhestvo*) and strength is found in the same volume that first revealed in print the long-rumored details of his homosexuality.

IV.

If the Wilde trial did not essentialize Chaikovsky as a pathological degenerate in Russia, it powerfully influenced and facilitated the growth of the suicide rumors, quickly lending them the status of myth. Their earliest documentary trace so far discovered is in the unpublished memoirs of R. Alois Mooser (1876-1969), a Swiss scholar who worked in the Russian capital as an organist and a music reviewer from 1896 to 1909, and whose richly researched, fabulously illustrated books on Russian musical institutions in the eighteenth century are musicological classics. Very early in his stay, Mooser reports, he was informed first about Chaikovsky's pederasty and then about his suicide, the source of his information being the Italian composer and conductor Riccardo Drigo, then on the ballet staff of the Imperial Theaters.

What is significant about Mooser's recollection is that for the first time the two aspects of Chaikovskian rumor—homo-

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sexuality and suicide—are linked. As paraphrased by Mary Woodside, a Canadian musicologist who is translating the document, Mooser's account is as follows:

> Tchaikovsky is said to have seduced the son of his apartment custodian, precipitating a complaint to the police. The local commissariat, uncomfortable at dealing with such an accusation against a major public figure, passed the complaint upward through the chain of command until it reached the Tsar himself. His majesty, shocked, declared sentence at once: The man "must disappear immediately." This having been conveyed to the composer, the poor man, realizing his career was at an end, poisoned himself.

The tale is altogether preposterous. (For starters, Chaikovsky did not live in an apartment and had no custodian.) As Mooser himself makes clear, he had his doubts about it. What is of interest about this version is the way it has so obviously been modeled on the details of the Wilde affair: seduction of a youth, denunciation by the father, prosecution by the crown. What was lacking for full conformity with the model was the high birth of the aggrieved parties. This was easily supplied.

Of all the "sensational gossips about Tchaikovsky's being involved in an unsavory statutory offense in the autumn of 1893," as Nicolas Slonimsky put it as early as 1938 in a forlorn effort to scotch them, one has achieved something like canonical status in the past fifteen years. This is the tale that was brought out of the Soviet Union by Alexandra Orlova, an émigré musicologist with excellent credentials, who had worked for a time in the Chaikovsky archive, still housed in his former residence at Klin, and had published fine documentary chronicles on the lives of the Russian composers Glinka, Musorgsky, Rimsky-Korsakov and Chaikovsky himself. In this new, improved version, the bringer of the complaint was Count Alexey Stenbock-Fermor, Equerry to Tsar Alexander III and a worthy stand-in for the Marquess of Queensberry. The counterpart to Lord Alfred Douglas was now no lowly porter's son but the young Count Alexander Stenbock-Fermor, the Royal Equerry's nephew. The order to commit suicide, in this telling, came not directly from the Tsar, but from an "honor court" of old boys from the Imperial School of Jurisprudence, Chaikovsky's alma mater, convened at the order of Nikolai Borisovich Yakobi, the senior procurator of the Senate (not a legislative but a judicial body in Tsarist Russia), who had intercepted Count Stenbock-Fermor's letter to the Tsar. The means of execution was said to be a poison that reproduced the symptoms of cholera.

Orlova must have heard this story, or others like it, many times over the years. In 1966, however, she heard it from the lips of a very late graduate of the Imperial School of Jurisprudence, who claimed to have heard it in 1913 from Yakobi's widow Ekaterina, who had heard it from her husband himself on his deathbed in 1902. Orlova accepted this version, carried from second to third to fourth hand over a period longer than Chaikovsky's lifetime, as eyewitness testimony, and set out, against all scholarly method, not to test it but to confirm it. Already an expert on Chaikovsky's daily movements, she located a span of several hours otherwise unaccounted for a week or so before the composer's death, decided that that was when the "honor court" convened, and declared the story proven.

But the story could have passed no tests. Alexander Poznansky, an émigré historian who has since published the one worthwhile biography of Chaikovsky, had no trouble at all demonstrating its implausibility on many counts—forensic, medical, toxological, historical—in an article that appeared in 1988 in the journal *Nineteenth-Century Music*. The most obvious weakness in the story, beyond its opportunistic replay of the Wilde affair, is the assumption that the mature Chaikovsky would have been vulnerable to such a denunciation (let alone willing to

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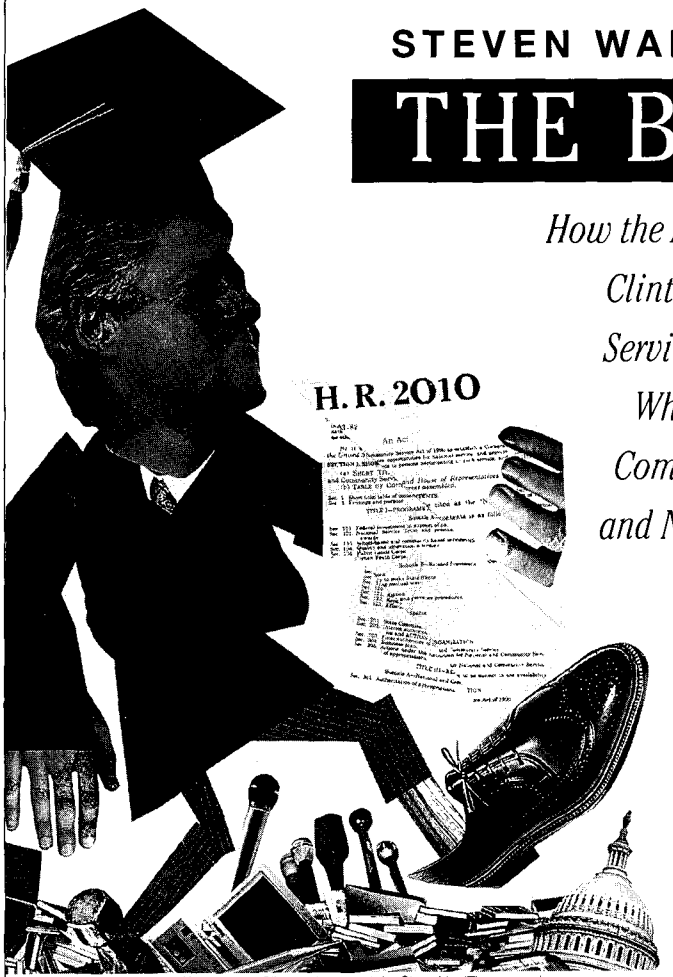

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accept a death sentence from what amounted to a bunch of forgotten high-school classmates, no matter how highly placed), and the corollary assumption that Russian aristocratic and even royal circles would have pounced with puritanical vengeance on a report of misdemeanors that were widely and openly practiced by Grand Dukes, major diplomats and powerful politicians. Poznansky has great fun listing them and their racy escapades, which were much more entertaining than anything the straitlaced Chaikovsky could ever be accused of.

Orlova can be forgiven. Her uncritical acceptance of venerable hearsay must be ascribed to delusion engendered in a scholar who has lived her life in an atmosphere of public mendacity and repression of fact, where anything secret or forbidden was granted an automatic presumption of veracity. But there can be no forgiving the British writers who have spread Orlova's rumors, and who continue to defend them. Their credulity is founded on the most benighted sexual essentialism, and their innocence of method has discredited musicology in the eyes of serious scholarship. The leader of the British suicide squadron has been David Brown, lately of the music faculty at the University of Southampton, who recently completed a monumental, much acclaimed four-volume biography of the composer.

It was Brown who translated Orlova's account for publication in a British musicological journal in 1981. Brown also persuaded the editor of the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* to allow him to end his article on Chaikovsky in the sixth edition of that august work of reference, published in 1980, with two categorical assertions: first, "that he committed suicide cannot be doubted"; and second, "the story that he died of cholera from drinking unboiled water is fabrication." This is cagily phrased. The part about the fatal glass of water, which exists in conflicting versions, has long been suspected, and its relationship to the onset of the disease is easily challenged and ultimately immaterial; but the basic fact of cholera, unwelcome and distasteful though it always has been, was attested to at the time not only by Modest but also by a team of four top physicians with professional reputations at stake, who never recanted. Their official word, as reported by the papers at the time, was that the composer had been cured of cholera but died of the complications, namely blood poisoning from uremia caused by kidney failure. (The most recent theory, put forth by a British doctor named Thomas Stuttaford, is that it may have been unsafe homosexual sex that brought Chaikovsky into contact with the plebeian *vibrio cholerae.*)

Though conceding that "what precipitated this [suicide] has not been conclusively established," the only version that Brown supplied was Orlova's, parroted in detail. Thus did a piece of folklore become ensconced in the written record at its most authoritative level. In Brown's biography itself, the last volume of which appeared in 1991, he acknowledges that Orlova's story, which "has caused much interest in the West" (true) and "seems now to be universally accepted in the Soviet Union" (flagrantly false) has its problems. "Its mode of transmission is such that it must be treated with a good deal of reserve, and the accuracy of its detail must be judged with even more caution." And yet he continues to tout it as the "one story" that "may provide the answer to the mystery."

Indeed, Brown now claims to possess corroboration for Orlova's story "through a second source quite independent of the first." This turns out to be a letter that Orlova received from Chaikovsky's sister-in-law's grand-niece, a certain Madame Kuznetsova-Vladimova, confirming the rumor's wide circulation and her great-aunt's participation in its spread. Here is where questions of ethics and competence have to be raised. It simply does not matter how many parties to a rumor one turns up. They are no more independent of one another than the various players in a game of telephone. So, far from recognizing the worthlessness of this testimony, Brown played the Kuznetsova letter like a trump card in a purported rebuttal to Poznansky, claiming, with dazzling naïveté, that his new source was not only independent but "rooted within the Tchaikovsky family."

Otherwise, all that Brown has been able to offer against Poznansky's refutations are ad hominems ("some people, it seemed, simply did not want to know") and testimonials, such as the hasty first reaction of *The New York Times* critic Donal Henahan, whose (later rescinded) endorsement of the suicide story played a major role in its propagation. Orlova's story, according to Henahan, inspired belief because it "reeks of the conspiratorial atmosphere of old Russian novels." This, of course, hit the nail right on the head.

The most recent proponents of the suicide theory—Britons again, one and all—defend it precisely in the manner of conspiracy theorists. The latest entry is Anthony Holden, the well-known royal biographer and poker expert, who showed up at the International Chaikovsky Symposium and Festival in Tübin-

1995 (Whew!) Needs a lot of thinking.

(In welfare, education, national security, telecommunications, agriculture, tort reform, and good old American competitiveness.)

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gen in October 1993 to announce that he had a life of the composer in the works, and to read a paper in which he clinched the case for suicide as follows:

> Tsar Alexander III was not merely a great admirer of Tchaikovsky's work; he was well aware of the homosexuality rife amid his own courtiers and immediate relatives. If the Tsar had received a letter of complaint about Tchaikovsky's indiscretions, there is little doubt that he would have consigned it to the nearest waste-paper basket. This seems to me to strengthen rather than weaken the case for suicide. It underlines the fundamental assumption of the conspiracy theorists, among whom I must now number myself: that Tchaikovsky would have preferred death to exposure, whatever the practical consequences.

Would an international scholarly convocation in any field other than music have been treated to such a defiance of logic? I wince at the insult to my profession, but I must quote Holden once more, because he states David Brown's case more forthrightly than Brown himself has done. "In the absence of documentary proof either way [sic]," Holden told his listeners in Tübingen:

> It can only be left to each Tchaikovsky student to reach his or her own private empirical verdict, based less on the available evidence than on an individual reading of the composer's psychological profile, his avowed suicidal tendencies and his attitude to his own sexuality. It is indeed the storm-tossed character of Tchaikovsky's life to that point which makes the court-of-honour seem an at all events plausible, even a grimly appropriate, conclusion.

V.

Imagine the kind of mind that could call such a judgment "empirical." What Holden, Brown and the rest are looking for is the proper artistic genre in which to cast the life of music's token gay: a tragic finale in which the hero perishes in consequence of his flaw, or a parable of redemption in which, by accepting the verdict of the honor court, the pervert shows himself upstanding in the end. Either way, the appeal of the suicide story is not that it happened, but that it ought to have happened. It is the foreordained culmination of a stereotyped existence.

Thus we are not surprised to find that third-sex folklore functions in David Brown's purportedly scholarly biography just as it does in biographical fiction, as a lens through which to view the life and the work alike, and thoroughly confuse the two. Earlier biographers and critics had to be content with dark references to "pathology" or "secret sorrow," but the emancipated scholar can refer frankly to Chaikovsky's "disease," speak its name and commit more hideous gaffes than ever. The first study of this kind was Edward Garden's *Tchaikovsky* (1973), which officially replaced Edwin Evans's pioneering handbook in the venerable *Master Musicians* series, and which was reissued in 1993 for the centennial. Garden's particular contribution to the understanding of Chaikovsky was the cheerful assumption, once widespread among the liberal ignorant, that nice homosexuals were celibate or (at best, or worst) onanists.

Commenting on the letter to Modest in 1876, in which Chaikovsky announced his intention "to enter into the union of a lawful marriage with whomsoever I may," Garden refers to the composer's "disgust brought on by an increasing sexual activity which is much more likely to have been autoerotic in the main rather than actively homosexual." When Chaikovsky goes on in his next letter to complain that his habits were stubborn, and that since writing the first time he had "already some three times given way to the force of my natural inclinations," we are given to understand that he had merely been "indulging his homosexual fantasies." The poor wretch is to be pitied rather than scorned (the biographer assures us), plagued as he was by "the necessary loneliness which was the lot in those days of the homosexual, unable as he was to establish a firm, constant and loving relationship with any other human being." Garden even lets it be known that Chaikovsky was "unable to feel sexually aroused."

DRAWING BY JACK COUGHLIN FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Brown quotes the same letters at greater length (though not quite in full, since they have not yet been published without cuts of one kind or another, and Brown himself has done no primary research). He seems content to allow them to speak for themselves, but that is because he is saving comment on them for his discussion of the tone poem *Francesca da Rimini*, composed a short time afterward. The first part of the work, which aurally evokes the buffeting winds described by Dante, is a famous tour de force of orchestration. Its second part is a torrid love duet for Francesca and Paolo, whose prolonged, blissfully furtive erotic dalliance is wonderfully suggested by a slow, serpentine theme that simply will not come to a cadence. Brown calls it "one of the broadest, most widely ranging, most magnificent, melodic statements Tchaikovsky had ever conceived."

So why, despite these qualities and its longstanding popularity, is *Francesca da Rimini* a failure? The letters to Modest hold the key. "Its real fault is excess," Brown explains. "In the slow movements of his last two quartets Tchaikovsky had already used obsessive

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repetition of an emotionally charged phrase as a means of heightened expressive address, but the extravagance of these two movements is modest compared to that of *Francesca da Rimini.*" And the charge of immodesty is only the beginning.

> Even more sadly is the portrayal of Francesca herself flawed, not simply by the overstatement of her theme, but above all by the grossly overblown conclusion that sets forth too brazenly her lovely, long-spun melody, bruising the refined image of this tormented lady whose griefs have been the more affecting because of her frailty. Himself possessed with feelings of sexual guilt, Tchaikovsky's identification with Francesca's shade has become so absolute, so complete that finally, as it were, her music becomes possessed with something of the agony that beset his own self. His own emotion overflows, and the whole canvas is indelibly stained.

Stained! Indelibly stained! Finally, to David Brown, Chaikovsky's tone poem is nothing more than the composer's bedsheet. The part about Chaikovsky's sexual guilt is debatable, as we'll see; but the biographer's sexual horror is palpable. It is displaced onto the music even as sympathy is outwardly expressed toward the man. But not even the man is spared. The condescending notion that this composer could only relate to his subjects and his tasks on the level of primitive emotional identification, and ran therefore a constant risk of self-destructive emotional overinvolvement, infantilizes, and in a caricatural way feminizes, perhaps the most disciplined and sophisticated creative artist nineteenth-century Russia ever produced.

The musicologist David Osmond-Smith, interviewing Brown for the *European Gay Review*, pressed him rather hard about the way in which he had interpreted the crucial letters to Modest. Responding to Brown's allegation that Chaikovsky's music reflects "the intense emotional pressure built up within [him] by this sense of being flawed," Osmond-Smith called attention to a passage in the second letter where Chaikovsky exclaims, with regard to his sister and other family members, "Do you really believe that the consciousness that they pity and forgive me is not painful to me when, at bottom, I am guilty of nothing!" This unintentionally farcical conversation then ensued:

> A: I have tended to interpret "I am guilty of nothing" as meaning that Tchaikovsky had never actually had physical relations with another man.
>
> Q: But in that case, how do you respond to the end of that same letter where he says . . . "Since my letter to you I have already some three times given way to the force of my natural inclinations," and so forth?
>
> A: I take that to refer to some sort of solitary sexual release.

What is so grimly comical is Brown's obliviousness that these assumptions of his contradict the suicide theory in which he has invested so heavily. If Chaikovsky really was as Brown describes him, then the Stenbock-Fermor clan had nothing to fear. With laudable tact, Osmond-Smith suggested to Brown at this point "that, as a heterosexual yourself, you may incline to the most socially 'acceptable' interpretation" of Chaikovsky's letters. This elicited from Brown a masterpiece of unwitting self-revelation.

> Yes, I admit there may be an element of wishful thinking here, for my initial attitudes toward homosexuality were formed many years ago at a time when the general social view was that it was not only tainting but essentially immoral, and however much I have shifted my views since then, something of that gut reaction remains, and there's nothing I can do about it—sadly. But since these sorts of attitudes were the very ones Tchaikovsky himself not only encountered but seems in large part to have accepted as being a fair judgment on his condition, it may be that I can perceive his feelings and judge his reactions with a particular understanding—and may I add, a particular sympathy.

So this smug biographer, not at all unconsciously or even tacitly, accepts his own "gut reactions" as all the evidence he needs for assessing the facts of Chaikovsky's life and judging the composer's works. It never even occurs to him to treat his suppositions as hypotheses, and to test them against observation to see if they really do coincide with the attitudes of Chaikovsky's world and its inhabitants. It was Brown's gut reaction that established for him beyond all questioning the "fact" that Chaikovsky did away with himself in a final bout of sexual guilt. And it was a similar gut reaction, no doubt, that allowed Stanley Sadie, the Grove editor, not only to be persuaded that the mangy rumor deserved mongering in his dictionary, but even to rationalize the lapse as an act of righteousness, "drawing attention forcibly to the cruelty and injustice of a society that could consider hounding a man to his death because of his sexual orientation," as he put it when challenged. But that cruelty and that injustice are not exposed by the suicide myth. They are its creations.

Others despaired: "Mutually Assured Destruction!" Our alternative: "Anti-Ballistic Missiles!"

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VI.

The issues at stake here are not confined to sexual stereotyping or subscholarly credulity. The treatment of Chaikovsky's homosexuality is only a facet of a much larger assumption—the assumption, as Stanley Hoffmann delightfully put it in these pages not long ago, that "there are universal values, and they happen to be mine." This was Hoffmann's definition of ethnocentrism; but it applies, as we see, to all kinds of centrisms. At bottom it comes down to the old colonialist worldview, and that must be why it surfaces so dependably in the work of British scholars of a certain age.

Writers such as David Brown and Edward Garden place a high premium on Chaikovsky's Russianness—a far higher one than Chaikovsky ever placed on it. Turning national character into a grading criterion, their first question about a piece of music is apt to be, How Russian is it? And it is a question that they have no hesitation answering in absurd comparative terms. "*The Nightingale* is the finest of his shorter choral pieces on secular texts," Brown writes, "and the most Russian." Dubrovin's leitmotif in the early opera *Voyevoda* is a "very Russian phrase," and Bastryukov's farewell in the Act I finale is "one of the most Russian passages in the whole of [the opera]." *Eugene Onegin* is "not only perhaps Tchaikovsky's masterpiece, but also the most deeply Russian of all his works."

Russianness, as a rule, is located in a peasant style. Its presence is vouchsafed by quoting or imitating folk tunes. Thus *The Nightingale* is Chaikovsky's "most Russian" chorus because of "its solo-choral opening, irregular metres and phrasing, its modality and dynamic contrasts"—all (save the arbitrarily asserted last one) being qualities observable in published anthologies of Russian folk songs, which, by and large, is where the thoroughly urbanized and Europeanized Chaikovsky observed them. The composer's environment, taste and education notwithstanding, Brown works hard to deduce the essentials of Chaikovsky's musical style from "pure folksong," the unmediated musical mirror of "the Russian mind." Chaikovsky, it is categorically asserted, was "endowed with a mind of this nature." His musical style was innate, biologically determined, and there was nothing the poor man could do about it. Brown dramatically posits the existence of an unbridgeable gap between "Russian instinct" and "Western method," the latter as categorically and reductively conceived as the former.

Viewing the Russian style and the Russian mind in this essentialized way leads to an obsession with purity. When such an obsession is voiced from the Russian side, of course, we call it "nationalism." It is something of which Brown and Garden energetically approve, and the "higher" the nationalism, the better; and this remains the conventional wisdom of musicology, strange to say. But when the obsession with Russian purity is voiced from the Western side, what shall we call it? What shall we make of the frequent chiding Chaikovsky receives from his British biographers for not being Russian enough?

In the finale of the Fourth Symphony, Garden declares, the pure folksong is "dragged in most inappropriately, squared off with two extra beats and ruined in the process." (Balakirev, Brown adds, had used the tune "more correctly" in his *Overture on Three Russian Themes.*) Chaikovsky gratuitously "mars" an aria in one of his operas, Brown announces, and "turns traitor to its essential Russianness by extending it with vocal sequence and operatic cadenza." There are even passages where the British biographer presumes to instruct his Russian subject in the ways of Russianness. They read like the words of a fatherly *bwana*, celebrating the picturesqueness of the quaint aboriginal world that he patronizes, ever watchful lest the natives, forsaking their essential natures, lose their exotic charm and start acting like his equals.

That is why Brown is so concerned to insist, even devoting a separately titled chapter addendum to it, upon "the Russianness of *Eugene Onegin*," the one Chaikovsky opera to have achieved supreme repertory status the world over, and a work in which the musical idiom is not stylistically marked with national character in a way that immediately advertises itself to the "Western" ear. Elsewhere Brown cites technical features in support of his diagnoses of (rustic) "Russianness," but here all he can do is adduce without commentary or amplification the testimony of authorities, chiefly Stravinsky and Prokofiev, to the effect that "Tchaikovsky drew *unconsciously* from the true popular sources of our race" (Stravinsky), and that "*Eugene Onegin* is the most intrinsically Russian opera" in which every dramatis persona "corresponded completely to the Russian character, each in his own way" (Prokofiev).

If Brown really knew Russia, or Russian music, or the cultural politics of interwar Paris (where Stravinsky and Prokofiev made their pronouncements), he would have known how to evaluate these comments and to deconstruct their mystique. Old Bolesław Przybyszewski had it right when he spoke of Chaikovsky as a "musical realist" who "drew his melodic style from the melodic springs of surrounding Russian reality," that is, the music of the Europeanized urban class to which the composer himself belonged. With tremendous insight and skill, Chaikovsky was able to abstract musical morphemes (what the shrewd, if politically contemptible, Soviet musicologist Boris Asafyev later christened "intonations") from this mongrel "town-song" idiom, instantly recognizable by Russians as indigenous, but inoffensively Western to Westerners. And it was naturally that urbanized, sophisticated, cosmopolitan Russian style that émigré modernists such as Stravinsky and Prokofiev would have sought to advance against the folkloric idiom that had become de rigueur in Red Russia, where the slogan "an art national in form and socialist in content" (in Stalin's very words) had forged a link that tainted idioms Westerners could apprehend as explicitly "Russian."

But Brown has his own agenda, his own mystique to construct. Preternatural, essential Russianness is not only Chaikovsky's chief glory and distinction; it is also what defines his limitations and his secondary, subcanonical status. "His was a Russian mind forced to find its expression through techniques and forms that had been evolved by generations of alien Western creators," Brown writes, "and, this being so, it would be unreasonable to expect stylistic consistency or uniform quality." His incurable Russianness made Chaikovsky an abject outsider to the "universal" traditions in which he sought to establish an international career.

This meant, in the first instance, symphonic music. Citing Chaikovsky's often agonized self-criticism—something the composer had in common with most master craftsmen, after all, and particularly with the hypercanonical Brahms—Brown sympathetically observes that "as a symphonist he did himself less than justice, for a composer who could show so much resourcefulness in modifying sonata structure so as to make it more compatible with the type of music nature had decreed he should write was no helpless bungler." And yet:

> What we experience in the finest classical expositions is not just a modulation but a process of controlled tonal dynamism. Such a command of tonal growth was utterly beyond Tchaikovsky, and this alone would have denied him the symphonic mastery of a Beethoven.

You won't find "controlled tonal dynamism" or "tonal growth" in any

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musical dictionary, nor are they defined by Brown. They are ad hoc terms of exclusion. Brown then elaborates:

> Being entirely devoid of ability to devise a planned tonal growth embracing a large span of music, Tchaikovsky has to swing to the opposite extreme, rigidly segregating his two subjects by constructing the first as a huge, tonally closed paragraph built upon the interaction and alternation of two themes, the one repetitive and static, the other chromatically emancipated and tonally subversive.

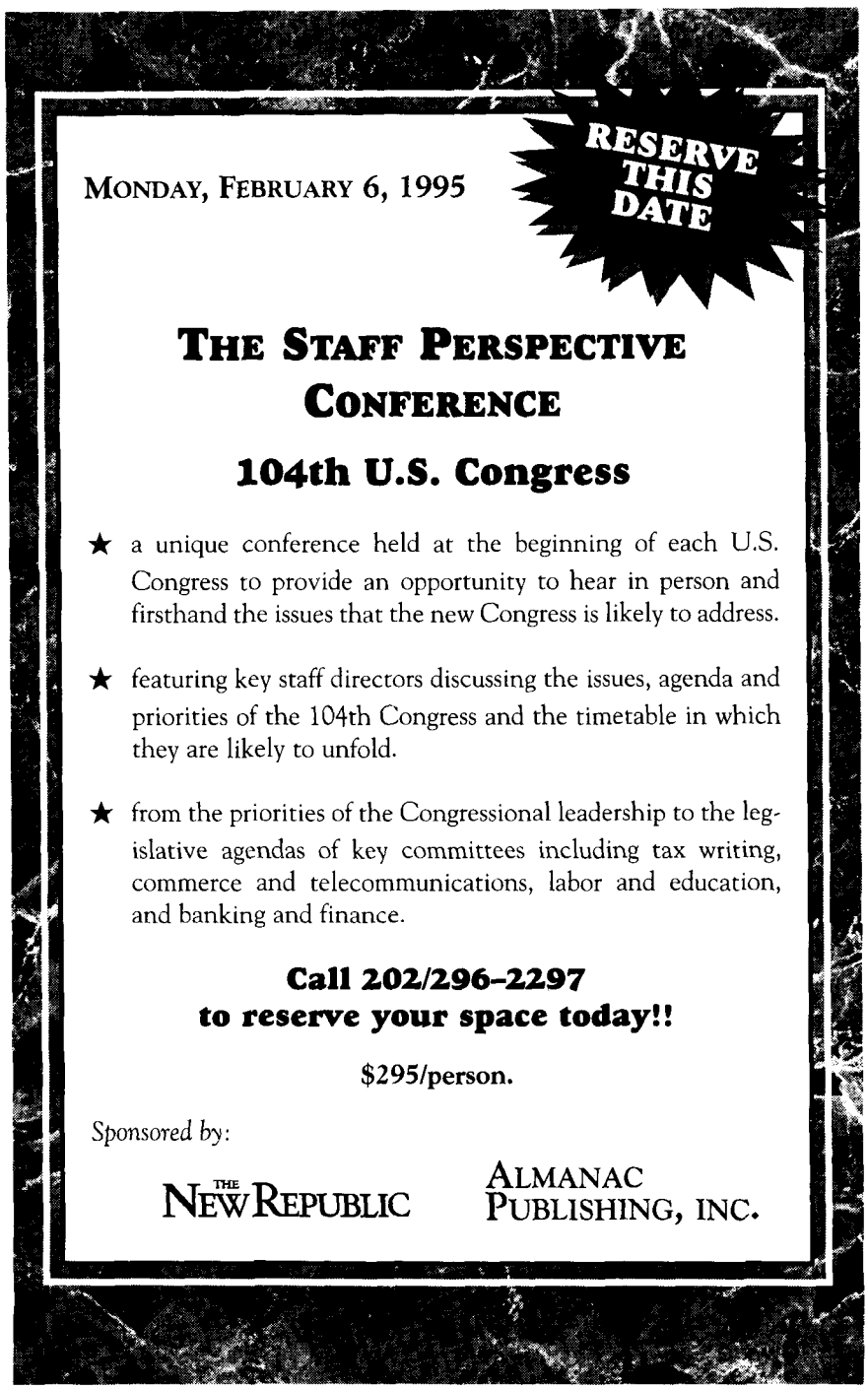
Brown, in other words, knows not only what Chaikovsky did, but also what he intended to do, and knows better than Chaikovsky why Chaikovsky did what he did, because he knows better than Chaikovsky what nature has permitted and what it has denied him.

There, in all nakedness, is the omniscient, totalizing rhetoric of the colonialist: the natives are not ready for self-government, nor will they ever be. So nature has decreed. And what goes for the third world goes for the third sex. The title character of Chaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin* is different from Pushkin's, and, to Brown, less attractive. Brown complains that Onegin, in Chaikovsky's final scene, "ends in cutting a pathetic figure": "If Tchaikovsky came to despise him, he took an unfortunate final revenge upon him. What seems much more likely is that Tchaikovsky's own nature stultified his capacity for creating music of truly masculine sexual declaration." Chaikovsky's Hermann, in *The Queen of Spades*, is also less of a man than Brown would like to see: he "pleads rather than lusts," avoiding "the powerful sexual declaration Tchaikovsky might have found difficult to sustain." The final confrontation of the lovers in that opera is unsuccessful for a similar reason: "Tchaikovsky simply did not know how to handle the emotional ambivalences of the love duet."

Consider the implications of this. Who is this man to be making such powerful declarations? He is an operose Bachelor of Music, with a reading knowledge of Russian acquired in the national service, who has never been to Russia, but who sat down with his scissors and his paste pot, the State Academic Edition of Chaikovsky's complete works at one elbow and the State Academic bowdlerization of the composer's massive collected correspondence at the other, and went happily a-crunching. The descriptive collation that he has cobbled up, prodigally if indiscriminately detailed as to biography, is calamitously incompetent as criticism. It passes judgments galore, as we have certainly seen, but they are entirely uninformed judgments—or rather, they are judgments informed not by knowledge of Russia or of Russians, of musical genres or their traditions, of nineteenth-century society or its various sub-cultures, but by a host of baccalaureate bromides and invincible Brittanic bigotries. The sheer girth and heft of Brown's volumes have compelled a respect that is in no other way their due. Worse, his work seemed destined, by discouraging competition, to earn a kind of definitive status by default. A book like this one threatens not only the state of research and the understanding of its subject, but also the intellectual health of its readers.

VII.

Happily, it did not turn out that way, thanks to Alexander Poznansky's superb biography, which instantly raised Chaikovsky studies to a new, if widely resisted, level of intelligence. All it took was a truly empirical approach at last, one that considered the historical circumstances, that maintained skepticism in the face of received ideas and gut reactions, that neither prevaricated nor generalized on the basis of the author's own life experience, that kept an open enough mind to formulate relevant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questions, test hypotheses and seek out, most resourcefully, appropriate sources of information.

Poznansky's book is not a full counterpart to Brown's. It attempts no commentary on the music beyond reporting the facts of its creation in the context of the biographical narrative, and providing pertinent, sometimes very illuminating, information on its reception. As its subtitle avers, its focus is on the man, not the work. But dispelling the cloud of silliness that surrounds the man enables a fresh look at the work as well.

The subtitle was not an altogether happy choice. A "quest for the inner man" might seem to signal yet another exercise in essentialism; but what Poznansky has in fact achieved is a study of a personality—and a creative persona—in the process of its formation within various interacting social and cultural milieux, and in its manifold adaptations to circumstances. A dynamic portrait emerges—an inner man cast not against an immutable and implacable "nature" of the biographer's contrivance, but perpetually re-forming himself in response to an outer flux. It is not only a portrait of Chaikovsky, but also a portrait of nineteenth-century Russia, the two of them drawn in subtle and edifying reciprocity. It is, all in all, a fabulous performance. The vehemence with which it has been denounced by the suicide squad is in its way a ringing recommendation.

The suicide debate, and Poznansky's role in its debunking, have lent special interest and resonance to the author's treatment of the homosexual theme. Indeed, to judge by most reviews of his book, one would think that it treated nothing else. That is far from the case, but the theme is inevitably spotlighted to an extent that would have been unnecessary were the author not forced to work against the weight of received opinion. Poznansky's methods, and the differences between his Chaikovsky and the others we have met, show up with special clarity from this perspective.

No smoking pistols are uncovered—but then, the fact of Chaikovsky's homosexuality did not need to be established. A particularly nasty review of Poznansky by Paul Griffiths, the novelist who covers music for *The New Yorker*, appeared in *The New York Times Book Review* under the heading "The Outing of Peter Ilyich"; but Chaikovsky was outed before anyone alive today was born. The question is not a whether question but a so-what question. How do we interpret what we know, and what shall be its bearing on our hearing and our thinking? It is Poznansky's interesting contention that we know more than we think we know. "Much of the documentary material referring to the composer's homosexuality has never been censored," he maintains, because the censors themselves did not know how to read it. Seemingly innocent circumstances can be made to betray a great deal when placed in the proper context.

That context must be sought, where sexual behavior is concerned, in the general sexological literature. It is more extensive and relevant than might be imagined, since the period of Chaikovsky's later lifetime coincided precisely with that of the pioneer studies in the psychology and sociology of sex. Poznansky has ransacked Krafft-Ebing and Havelock Ellis (both of whom used Russian informants), but he also has turned up fascinating indigenous material—works by Ivan Merzheyevsky, a physician, and Venyamin Tarnovsky, a jurist—in the field of contemporary forensic medicine. He draws as needed upon the more recent clinical literature for guidance in interpreting his data. This is known as doing

At Ellen Doyle's Brook

Since there's no childhood
without a witch, the children had
some mockery they chanted
in your brogue when they danced
up the dust around your cottage.

Counterpoint to Baileyville's
laundry ghosting on your lines,
was it worse than the silences
their elders used, or is all that
a question of temperament?

As soon pin you down now as capture
your washwater in this stream
they gave your name. You were
different, elusive as your brook's
obscure beginnings and ends,

and sentenced between silences,
you starched their tatted
handkerchiefs you thought were
doilies, amusing to some
even now their song's escaped them.

This water you made yours
a bucket at a time
beats any stone memorial, as the wrecked
millrace attests, and anyone who reads
your moods in leaf-defended

pools—where something grey
whispers itself up to the risk
of one quick sip, or a fleeting yellow
jumps in, spontaneous as a laugh,
and shaking, springs off through the trees—

must see this water underwritten
by hill snows, digesting ice, muscling up
with rain to wash the road out
and beat back underground any prize rose
a lady bequeaths her name.

Brendan Galvin

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your homework. It is unprecedented in Chaikovsky research.

The tricky part is collating general information gleaned in this way with the published contents of Chaikovsky's letters and diaries, from which the most explicit sexual references have presumably been expurgated. (In the case of the diaries, which survive very spottily, one suspects the composer himself to have been the chief censor.) Poznansky possesses exceptional mastery of the Chaikovsky sources and remarkable powers of inference. The two most impressive chapters of this kind are the one in which Chaikovsky's surviving, very laconic diary entries are collated with the contemporary juridical and medical literature on sexual deviance, and the one in which his letters home from Paris and Rome are similarly interpreted.

Thus a young bathhouse attendant's description, via Merzheyevsky, of *muzhelozhstvo* or buggery, as he and his peers practiced it with their gentleman patrons, is juxtaposed with notations in Chaikovsky's diary that chronicle his visits to the Znamensky Baths in St. Petersburg—"Znamensky's. Timothy," reads one; "With Tim. Somehow wasn't any fun. It's not the same anymore," reads another—and visits to the Bruce Hotel in Moscow, which Poznansky identifies as the second city's main gay rendezvous: "Bruce, even though it's Sunday. Pleasure and remorse." Or again, Chaikovsky writes home from Paris, "I roamed all about senselessly and without pleasure until twelve midnight." With the aid of Krafft-Ebing, quoted in the extract that follows, Poznansky infers that the composer had been cruising.

> If there was no pleasure, why did he not return earlier? In his sexual practices, Tchaikovsky was never monogamous. His upbringing, his usual timidity, and his deep commitment to his relatives prevented him from living openly with a male lover, as [Prince Alexey] Golitsyn or [the poet Alexey] Apukhtin [the composer's lifelong friend] both did. This forced him to search for sexual fulfillment through anonymous encounters. The writings of several sexologists and criminal authorities of the nineteenth century contain repeated references to particular areas in every large European capital where homosexual men would stroll and meet one another, so-called promenades, where "throwing but a single brief glance, they never erred and would meet men whom they had never seen before but whom they recognized in a single second." It was not necessary to be part of a specific circle in order to learn where these meeting places were in any large city. Even remaining on the fringes of the homosexual milieu, as Tchaikovsky certainly did, one inevitably heard rumors, and Tchaikovsky's letters and diaries show that he knew the spots where the aunties gathered in Paris as well as in Moscow and St. Petersburg.

Predictably enough, Poznansky has been excoriated for his impertinence in interpreting "mere" circumstantial evidence. Griffiths, in particular, reacted with loathing to the suggestion "that St. Petersburg in the 1870s had something in common with San Francisco a century later." Yet the charge backfires. Circumstantial evidence, at least until the holdings of the Chaikovsky Archive in Klin get their post-Soviet scouring, is the only kind available. Those who impugn its use are not arguing in favor of better evidence; they are arguing in favor of no evidence, which is to say the free play of traditional prejudice.

That Poznansky is not simply wringing homosexual readings out of ambiguous documents is evident from his careful treatment of one particular source that has been recklessly and opportunistically read by every previous biographer. A diary that Chaikovsky kept in the spring of 1884 during a visit to his sister's estate contains coded references to two "sensations" (*oshchushcheniya*), one labeled x and the other z. A typical notation of this kind reads, "There was a lot of z. Ah, what a monstrous person I am!" The combination of code, sensation and negative judgment is irresistible, of course, to those wedded to the notion of Chaikovsky as the flawed protagonist of a tragedy. Garden pounces: "The diary is illuminating and it certainly confirms beyond doubt not only his homosexuality, which he refers to by means of a private symbol, but his feelings of guilt about it." Brown pounces: "There can be little doubt that the symbols x and z . . . denote homosexual drives. Most clearly of all, [the diary] vividly records an early stage of what was to be the central sexual attraction of his remaining years: his passion for his nephew Bob [Davydov]."

Keeping an open mind, Poznansky noticed something else. The codes appear not in the context of references to Bob or any other putative sexual object, but in the context of card-playing, for which Chaikovsky nurtured a guilty passion that tormented him for the time it wasted, and for the hostile feelings it aroused in him toward his sister and other playing partners. As Poznansky observes, there are many Russian words denoting hostile emotions, such as envy (*zavist'*), spite (*zloba*), or malice (*zlost'*), that begin with one of Chaikovsky's code letters. He suggests that x denoted the urge to gamble and z the unworthy feelings his losses inspired. The memoirs of an old acquaintance would seem to bear this out: Vladimir Pogozhev, a small-time composer and theater official, recalled that at vint, a variant of bridge, Chaikovsky "played without particular skill but heatedly." In any case, the very survival of this particular diary, when so many others have evidently perished, argues strongly against its containing the kind of explicit, impassioned sexual revelations the British biographers have found in it.

The picture of the mature Chaikovsky that emerges from Poznansky's account is of a man who was sexually active, far from totally unsatisfied, and not particularly guilt-ridden. In sum, Chaikovsky managed, with the help of loving family and friends, to adapt himself—as humans will, by and large—to his condition, and to achieve an acceptable modus vivendi within his society's mores. By the end of his life, Poznansky concludes, Chaikovsky was a reasonably happy man. In the company of loved ones, Chaikovsky's late days were "filled with warmth and joy."

VIII.

Many people, it seems, simply cannot bear the thought of a homosexual man enjoying life. Griffiths is only the most strident of those who have protested what they take to be

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the commonness of the spectacle that Poznansky has unveiled. Instead of the figure of the noble or ignoble sufferer, which would reassure them, they are confronted with a man engaging in cheerful sex "with a variety of fellow musicians, male prostitutes, bathhouse attendants, domestic servants, coachmen and family members," in Griffiths's accurate summary. Obviously, Griffiths blusters, such a portrait can only be a "tottering castle of unwarranted, indelicate extrapolations." Yet neither he nor any other objector has caused it to totter. As the archives begin to yield up their contents in the wake of the Soviet collapse, we can expect it to become firmer.

The process is set to begin with the publication (whenever the Russians find the time and the funds to resume their musicological activity) of Modest Chaikovsky's unfinished and long-suppressed autobiography. Whereas in writing up the life of his adored older brother Modest had expunged every reference to homosexuality, and even defaced his source material in a counterproductive effort to put an end to rumors, in his own memoirs he tells a different story. When, in 1864, his twin Anatoly told him the terrible secret that he had learned about the 24-year-old Pyotr's sexual preferences, he was amazed at the 14-year-old Modest's reaction. "I forgot every trouble," Modest wrote half a century later,

> and was filled with inexpressible joy. A heavy rock fell from my shoulders. I am not a freak, I am not alone in my strange desires. I may find sympathy not merely with the pariahs among my comrades, but with Pyotr! I may fall in love and feel no shame since Pyotr understands me!... With this discovery everything became different. Mankind split into "ours" and "theirs".... The earlier self-contempt changed into self-satisfaction, and pride to belong among the "chosen."

Reaction-formation? Sure. Deception? No. A memoir like this was hardly the kind of story that Modest would have wished to circulate, and it was unprintable anyway at the time of writing. It was set down at the prompting of a private impulse, and gives evidence of what we would now call gay solidarity and gay pride. It was a solidarity that, Poznansky strongly argues, the famous composer eventually found restorative and sustaining.

Against such evidence the other side will always cite the music itself. "I find it very difficult to believe that a man who produced something like the Sixth Symphony was totally at ease," says Brown, in answer to Poznansky's challenge. "You only have to listen to the Sixth Symphony to hear a man in torment," says John Purdie, the director of Holden's BBC-T.V. movie *Who Killed Tchaikovsky?* "The finality of the testament of the Sixth Symphony almost makes it superfluous for us to indulge in any sort of speculation," says Alan Kendall, an especially fatuous pop biographer, who proceeds to speculate that "the music is the man." Alas, even Poznansky shows himself gullible here, suddenly uncritical of Chaikovsky family traditions, when he writes pleonastically that "the Sixth Symphony was intentionally conceived by its author as autobiographical," the result of "an irresistible desire to retell in music the story of his life and his soul and to dedicate it to Bob so that his beloved nephew might be able to share and appreciate all that he himself had gone through."

Yet Poznansky's own work should free us from these simplistic views, for it explodes the idle notion of a direct parallel between the composer's life experience and the undoubtedly tragic mood of the symphony. For that we can be grateful. Biographical fallacies only cheapen aesthetic response. Art is, well, artful; and of no art is that truer than the romantic art of confession, of which the *Pathétique* is perhaps the outstanding example. "Always be sincere," Flanders and Swann used to say, "whether you mean it or not." That might have been Chaikovsky's motto. His practically unparalleled ability to live up to it made him, in Pozanansky's apt phrase, a "genius of the emotions"—not a genius at having emotions (we're all geniuses at that), but a genius at representing them, yours and mine as well as his.

A year after reviewing the Fourth Symphony, Corno di Bassetto covered "the late Tchaikowsky's last symphony, which was very interesting." Once again, Byron came to mind. "Like Childe Harold," the critic wrote, "who was more tragic when there was nothing whatever the matter with him than an ordinary Englishman is when he is going to be executed, Tchaikowsky could set the fateful drum rolling and make the trombones utter the sepulchral voice of destiny without any conceivable provocation." It could be said that Shaw didn't hear much of anything in the *Pathétique*, and that's too bad; but among the things he didn't hear was a man in torment.

What was Chaikovsky feeling while composing his Sixth Symphony? As Shaw surmised, there was nothing whatever the matter with him. Quite the contrary. The act of producing the symphony filled his last summer with bliss. "I have never felt such self-satisfaction, such pride, such happiness," he wrote to his publisher, "as in the consciousness that I am really the creator of this beautiful work." After the first performance he spent a cheerful week, his last, in St. Petersburg with Bob and Modest. During intermission at the theater one evening he went backstage to greet one of the leading actors, a friend of his brother's. Conversation turned to spiritualism, thence to death itself. The composer of the *Pathetic Symphony* waved the subject aside. "There is plenty of time before we need reckon with this horror; it will not come to snatch us off just yet!" he remarked to Modest. Then he added, "I feel I shall live a long time." •

The Global Optimists

BY FRANCIS FUKUYAMA

America's Mission: The United States and the Worldwide Struggle for Democracy in the Twentieth Century by Tony Smith

(Princeton University Press, 455 pp., $24.95)

There was a period, shortly after the end of the cold war, when it appeared that the old divisions between hawks and doves would be replaced by new disagreements between realists and liberal internationalists. The realists argued that the international arena was a perpetual struggle for power among states, regardless of the nature of regimes, and that security and stability were best achieved through unsentimental pursuit of a balance of power in the international system. The liberal internationalists argued that aggression tended to be caused by authoritarian governments of various sorts, and that the best means of promoting global security was through the enlargement of the "zone of peace" composed of liberal democracies.

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This view of the changing foreign policy choices before us has proved, I think, only partially correct. Events of the past few years have convinced virtually everyone except for a few hard-core academic theorists that the way states treat their own citizens has implications for the way they relate to the outside world, and that the spread of stable democracy tends to reduce conflict. Even veteran realists such as Henry Kissinger and Zbigniew Brzezinski accept the premise of liberal internationalism that there is a link between liberal democracy and peace. On the other side, the liberal internationalists' formerly heavy emphasis on international law and organizations such as the League of Nations and the U.N. has been muted. An echo remains in contemporary calls for multilateral rather than unilateral peacekeeping, but the issue has become much less important in the liberal tradition than direct promotion of democracy.

The real arguments between so-called realists and so-called liberal internationalists are not over the causal relationship between democracy and peace, but rather over the prospects of liberal democracy taking root in a given country or region, and over whether the United States could usefully promote that outcome. In this debate, the liberal internationalists tend to be relatively optimistic about democracy's chances, and the realists much more pessimistic. The former tend, as a consequence, to be more activist in the promotion of democracy around the world, less willing to compromise with authoritarians, and less willing to bend principles for the sake of strategic self-interest than the realists.

Thus recent arguments over Haiti centered on whether restoration of Jean-Bertrand Aristide to power constituted real democracy, and whether the real democracy could ever be consolidated in so troubled a country. All sides in the debate over MFN status for China agree that China would likely be a more cooperative member of the international community if it, like Taiwan and South Korea, democratized and established a rule of law. The real differences arise concerning the effectiveness of sanctions as a means of moving China in that direction. And the debate about expanding NATO to include Poland, Hungary and other new East European democracies revolves around the question of democracy in Russia. Proponents of prompt expansion such as Kissinger and Brzezinski have argued that it is extremely unlikely that Russia will be able to cast off its imperialist past and consolidate true European democratic institutions; those potentially threatened by Russian power ought, therefore, to prepare for the worst by moving NATO east. Much of contemporary foreign policy is thus reducible to arguments over the domestic political development of various foreign countries, and over the ways in which democracy can be promoted by the outside world.

America's Mission provides a comprehensive historical review of the record of American liberal internationalism. Tony Smith argues persuasively that liberal internationalism is not, as Kissinger sometimes implies, a cultural quirk of unsophisticated Americans. Rather, it has built on powerful global historical trends. The liberal internationalist streak in American foreign policy has, in turn, been responsible for shaping a liberal world order conducive to American security and economic interests.

The book's chronicle of American efforts to promote democracy starts, interestingly, not with the entry of the United States into the world scene during the Spanish-American War, but with Reconstruction in the South after the Civil War, and continues up through the presidencies of Wilson, Roosevelt, Truman, Kennedy, Carter, Reagan, Bush and Clinton, all of whom, he argues, pursued liberal-internationalist policies.

The most controversial aspect of this book will doubtless be Smith's willingness to place Reagan in the Wilsonian liberal internationalist tradition. The author is, however, quite right to do so. Reagan was admittedly hostile to the United Nations, and Iran-contra was not a case of "open covenants openly arrived at." His version of liberal internationalism, like that of Senator Henry M. Jackson, emphasized anti-communism on the grounds that Marxism-Leninism constituted the single greatest threat to democracy around the world. But this emphasis proved quite justified in the wake of the collapse of the "evil empire."

Moreover, if we understand liberal internationalism as optimism about the prospects of democracy and free markets, Reagan was (as Smith points out) utterly visionary: while the realist Kissinger argued that we had to learn to live with communism because it was here to stay, Reagan believed it was consigned to the "dustbin of history" and that the Berlin Wall had to come down. Reagan, Smith argues, coupled these radical objectives toward the Communist world to relatively moderate and pragmatic means, and could in the end rightly accept considerable responsibility for the democratic transformations that took place during the 1980s. (Smith, correctly, does not endorse the Reagan administration's claims that it was directly promoting democracy by supporting the contras in Nicaragua, though the so-called Reagan doctrine did play an important role in the collapse of the Soviet empire.)

Moving beyond these generalities about the benefits of democracy to specific cases, however, any policymaker must address two related questions: Is a country capable of consolidating meaningful democratic institutions, and, if so, what set of American policies can help it move in that direction? There are many cases of American officials guessing wrong, with often tragic results. In some cases, such as the Philippines, Mexico and the Dominican Republic, Woodrow Wilson (among others) greatly underestimated the difficulties in creating viable democracies. On the other hand, policymakers have also underestimated the likelihood of democracy. Many of America's Japan experts were pessimistic in 1945 about whether that country could democratize. Fortunately, they were not in the driver's seat: "had [the Supreme Command Allied Powers staff] known more [about Japan], they might have accomplished less." Smith points out that Jeanne Kirkpatrick, an expert on Argentina, leaned toward the Argentine junta while at the United Nations during the Falklands crisis in 1982 because she did not believe democracy was a viable alternative for that country.

The analysis in *America's Mission* gives us some guidance as to how to make such judgments, but in the end it falls short. Smith's explanation for the failure to promote democracy in the Third World (as well as in the post-Reconstruction South) lies in the blindness of American policymakers concerning what he calls the socioeconomic dimension of democracy. In many agrarian countries, he argues, political life is dominated by a small landed elite; unless the power of this social group is broken through land reform or some other dramatic redistribution of power, the formal institutions of democracy will continue to reflect the undue influence of this class. Hierarchical agrarian societies are seldom capable of supporting the complex civil society necessary for real democracy. In the Philippines, the Dominican Republic and Nicaragua, the United States intervened to establish modern democratic political institutions alone, without undertaking more thoroughgoing transformations of the social structure. Smith argues that the democratization of Germany and Japan was successful precisely because the New Deal reformers running the occupation administrations in each country understood the socioeconomic foundations of

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democracy, and used their control of state power to intervene aggressively to promote land reform and to break up concentrations of economic power.

There is, obviously, much to this argument. Contemporary Japanese will be the first to admit that the American-imposed land reform was a critical basis for the postwar political system. Land reform efforts in Taiwan and South Korea, encouraged though not mandated by the United States, are generally seen as the grounds for those countries' remarkably egalitarian income distribution in later years, and hence for democracy. The fragility of democracy in the Philippines, conversely, is related to the fact that the United States failed to take advantage of the several opportunities it had to promote land reform—most recently, after the fall of Ferdinand Marcos in the late 1980s.

The problem for American foreign policy is that the United States is almost never in a position where it can engineer this kind of thoroughgoing social revolution. It is no accident that the two most successful cases of democratization came in defeated countries that were militarily occupied by the United States. In Germany and Japan, former elites had been thoroughly discredited through their involvement in the war and could easily be shunted aside in favor of new, democratic leaders. In much of the Third World, elites are few in number and poorly organized, leaving little alternative to existing authoritarian and/or corrupt leaders. The United States was willing to retain forces, and hence influence, in Japan and Germany for several generations. The United States theoretically could have done this in various Third World countries, but American voters have seldom been willing to support this level of commitment.

While Smith downplays the linkage between industrialization and democracy, it is not clear that land reform in the absence of sustained economic development is sufficient ground for stable democracy in many cases. The correlation between development and democracy is not a perfect one—exceptions such as India and Costa Rica come to mind—yet it is supported by substantial empirical evidence, including much in Smith's own book. What is striking about cases such as the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Nicaragua or the Philippines where Wilson and others sought to promote democracy, is that the United States has not been able to do this in virtually any underdeveloped country. The successful cases of democratization all come in relatively advanced industrial societies: Japan and Germany, occupied directly by the United States after the war, as well as other nations in Western and later Eastern Europe. Democracies also managed to re-emerge in the 1980s in middle-tier countries such as Argentina, Chile and Brazil, though not as a result of direct American pressure.

The story in the poorer parts of Third World, as related in *America's Mission*, is much more depressing. The first round of failures came in Latin America during the first two decades of this century, where interventions by the United States in Cuba, Nicaragua, the Dominican Republic and Haiti created only temporary stability and eventually ended in takeovers by right-wing dictators once American forces left. Indeed, in Nicaragua and the Dominican Republic, the United States made things worse by creating supposedly "professional" National Guard organizations that became the instruments by which the Somoza and Trujillo dictatorships held power. These experiences led the Roosevelt administration to learn to live with Latin American authoritarians under the rubric of the "Good Neighbor" policy.

The Kennedy administration's Alliance for Progress was an ambitious attempt to undercut Castro by promoting economic development and political reform in the Western hemisphere. But by the early '70s nearly all countries in the region had succumbed to military authoritarian rule. The Carter administration's human rights campaigns in Nicaragua and Iran were not the only factors leading to the fall of friendly dictators there, but, as Smith himself argues, they were naïve and counterproductive. The only country strongly influenced by the United States that did develop democratic institutions was the Philippines, but here Smith would be the first to admit that democracy has little social basis and remains highly vulnerable.

In virtually all Third World cases, the United States either did not have the authority to effect major social transformations, lacked the national will to use such power when it was available or simply wasn't interested. Smith's evidence, indeed, leads to a much more pessimistic conclusion: given that the United States can build democracy in a poor, agrarian country only through massive intervention over the course of a couple of generations, it is probably better in most cases not to try. A half-hearted effort, in which the United States creates some modern institutions but not others, is at best a waste of time and at worst will leave the country in question under more effective authoritarian rule.

There is an alternative route, however, to achieving the large social transformations necessary to sustain democratic institutions, which is the promotion of economic development through orthodox economic liberalization. Smith expresses considerable skepticism concerning such policies, and yet there are an increasing number of cases, including Chile, Argentina and Mexico, where liberalization has yielded dramatic results. This method poses risks and pays off politically only over the long term, but is not nearly as demanding of outside time and effort as the New Deal interventionism favored by Smith. In these cases, what the United States needs to provide is sound advice, technical help in institution building and currency stabilization and openness of its own economy to trade and investment. This does not lead to a hard-and-fast rule that economic development must be put before democratization: a number of poor countries—Costa Rica, India, Botswana—have had good democratic track records despite low per capita incomes. It would have been absurd to have urged Argentina, Brazil, Poland or Hungary to put off democratization until they got their economic houses in order; liberalizing economic reform in these cases was a necessary adjunct to democratic stabilization.

While it is possible to be more pessimistic than Tony Smith concerning the feasibility of American political intervention in Third World countries to promote democracy, one can be far more optimistic than he is about the prospects of sensible economic policies producing growth and hence, over the long run, democracy as well. There is a larger pattern in history in the direction of democracy, but it unfolds slowly and discontinuously.

The way the cold war ended taught us that there is a large degree of congruence between the promotion of democracy and strategic self-interest. Its end also has made less necessary those difficult cold war compromises of democratic principles, as in Iran, Guatemala or Chile. But the basic dilemma of where and how to support democracy remains, since we are drawing on a much more limited fund of political capital to support intervention abroad. *America's Mission* engages this issue seriously, but in the end inadequately.

FRANCIS FUKUYAMA's *Trust: The New Foundations of Global Prosperity* will be published by The Free Press this summer.

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NEW YORK DIARIST

Legends

I AM ONE OF THOSE PEOPLE WHO is always haunting Sotheby's and Christie's, New York's two great auction houses, and I haunt them in search of underappreciated fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Italian pictures. It is unusual for there not to be something spectacularly underappreciated: after all, even the art public is fickle. The auction market is as close as we get in our time to a true free market, which is why there are always dealers buying and seldom selling in it—unless, that is, they're desperate. Of course, it is true that there are instances in which hype helps set the price. But this is rare, and then only in the higher range. In these transactions the buyer is never a dealer. The auctions are also subtexts to social and cultural history, an index to declining and rising fortunes and the tastes of their possessors.

LAST WEEK SOTHEBY'S WAS SELLing Old Master paintings from what was surely America's earliest serious collection—it dates to the 1850s—and it was selling these because their owner, the New York Historical Society on Central Park West (not to be confused with the New York State Historical Association in Cooperstown), was otherwise broke. Its socialite trustees had sat but did not give. The society is, as its current executive director puts it, "reinventing" itself, perforce, one might say. Later this year it will open an exhibition of contemporary images of Elvis Presley and Marilyn Monroe, hot stuff (not its own exhibit, mind you, but one originating at Boston's Institute for Contemporary Art), and another on quotidian objects such as the nineteenth-century ceramic roach trap. Oh yes, "we will also need to tell the stories of all the many diverse people...." Of course.

RUDOLF NUREYEV, WHO, LIKE ANDY Warhol, collected everything, also collected Old Masters. Which is presumably why Christie's put the sale (for the benefit of two charitable foundations) of his worldly remains in the auction ambit of gold-ground altar pieces, Renaissance portraits, Mannerist tableaux, Dutch landscapes and Flemish still lifes. Nureyev did not have great taste in classical paintings, and his fleshier ones were notably ugly. Nonetheless, there was something grand in his acquisitions taken as a whole, even if the Tang Dynasty horse was, as Christie's scrupulously pointed out, merely Italian-made in the Tang style. The grandeur was reflected in the Nureyev catalog of some 500 lots that were sold over three sessions, from the tunic he danced in in *Sleeping Beauty* to the Victorian copper bathtub from his apartment in the Dakota. For several days before the actual auctions, all of the Nureyev items were on display. The crush I saw reminded me of the filmclips I'd seen of the funeral of Rudolf Valentino. For the most part, the paintings sold close to the catalog estimates, which were not at all inflated and were much lower than what Nureyev, a very rich man, had paid for them only a few years ago. The market had risen and now it was fallen, and present value is present value. (This catalog told you not only what the price had been at public auction but what Nureyev had paid privately to dealers.) Still, the bidding was relentless. There was hardly a pause in rhythm. Virtually every one of the relics of his ballet career sold far above estimate, his costume as Prince Albrecht in *Giselle* for $51,750, a pair of pink ballet slippers for $9,200. And so did the lamps, chairs, tables, shawls and knickknacks with which he had surrounded himself. A silver-plate wine cooler, estimated at between $120 and $180, sold for $1,250. A matching pair of 1960s yellow velvet couches, estimated at $6,000 to $8,000, sold for $43,700. (Before these were Nureyev's they belonged to Maria Callas.) Pegged at $3,000 to $4,000, the tub went for $33,500. These prices are not market prices. They are devotional prices. In a certain blasphemous sense, they are all pieces of the true cross. And for many people they are, therefore, priceless.

EVERYWHERE MUSEUMS ARE ENgaging in what they call "outreach," and everywhere they are failing. What they mean by outreach, of course, is trying to get blacks and other minorities—but just blacks would be just fine!—through their doors. Last week I spent a few hours at the Metropolitan Museum and the only blacks I saw were guards. It's more or less the same at Washington's National Gallery and Chicago's Institute and Boston's MFA. This is particularly depressing: if blacks don't look at art there'll be no blacks to become professors of art history. The stark fact is that the educated black middle and upper-middle classes do not go to museums, and they do not go to concerts either. Last week I went to hear the New York Philharmonic play Richard Strauss's *A Hero's Life*. My eyes saw there were two black members of the orchestra. But, as far as I could tell, there was just one black person in the audience. Maybe there were two or even three. But there weren't more. This is the dubious achievement of the multiculturalists who are really uniculturalists. They have persuaded black people to stay at home culturally. There is a real difference, as Leon Wieseltier has argued, between a multicultural society and a multicultural individual. The multicultural society is a map riven by frontiers. The multicultural individual tries to break down the borders built up in his head. It is very hard now for a young and hip educated black to be a multicultural individual. It is hard for a young and hip educated white not to be. This is why there are so many whites listening to Wynton Marsalis and Josh Redman. But their jazz is not any more only the culture of blacks. It's everyone's culture.

I SAW EDWARD ZWICK'S *LEGENDS OF the Fall* for the second time last weekend. The first time out, I went just to see it. This time I went to understand why a few movie critics, including Stanley Kauffmann, didn't like it. My impression is that they were so rattled by its epic aspects that they didn't see it for what it was: an intimate tale with classical, or, to be more precise, biblical resonance. This is no fault of Zwick's. Critics who think cinema should be talky little plays on screen are always jarred by grand proportions. Zwick's gift in *Legends*—he demonstrated it in *Glory*, too—is to set character into place and into time. This is really a movie about fathers and sons, as Turgenev's novel is about fathers and sons, and Edmund Gosse's memoir and Franz Kafka's letter, a primordial story. Zwick takes eternal themes and stretches them, in an American (and Native American) frame, against solidarity and courage, love and brooding, nature and war. No American filmmaker, and certainly not Oliver Stone, tells us about war more vividly and with less gore. This director knows how to evoke emotions and how to provoke tears, and he does so honestly. His movie is already wildly popular. So elite filmgoers will not be missed at the box office. But it would be a shame if they were to forgo seeing the latest film of someone who shows every sign of being our own Bertolucci.

MARTIN PERETZ

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